

IN PRAISE OF EARLY NIGHTS

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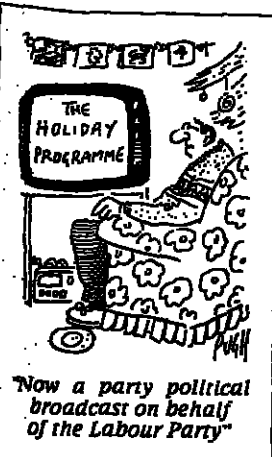
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Blair and family steal away for a break in the Seychelles



By NICHOLAS WATT AND STEPHEN FARRELL

TONY BLAIR has set aside the burdens of office and discreetly whisked his family away to the Seychelles for a week's holiday. Accompanied by his wife, Cherie, and three children, and Gale Booth, his mother-in-law, the Prime Minister landed yesterday morning on the picturesque island of La Digue after an overnight flight from Gatwick. This is the Blairs' second foreign holiday since the election.

They have rented a lodge in the grounds of an old plantation house owned by President René of the Seychelles. The house, called La Grande Case, gained notoriety

when it was used as the setting for the steamy film *Goodbye Emmanuelle*. The lodge the Blairs have rented is not owned by the President and will cost £200 a day.

The Prime Minister's break in the sun was kept under such tight wraps that many staff in Downing Street had no idea that the Blairs had sneaked away on Sunday night. One press officer, who was asked about the whereabouts of the Prime Minister yesterday morning, said: "He's at Chequers."

The Blairs flew out on an Air Seychelles flight from Gatwick on Sunday night, landing at Mahé, the main island of the Seychelles, ten and a half hours later. The prime ministerial party, including body-



La Digue, where the Blairs have rented a £200-a-day lodge

guards and aides, booked weeks in advance and occupied business-class seats on the Boeing 767-200. The full fare for each adult is £2,911, with a 30 per cent discount for young children. Evan, 13, and

Nicholas, 12, are both over the age limit and would have travelled as adults. The Blairs paid for their own tickets, but the travel costs of the police and civil servants, who are in charge of setting up a communica-

tions link, were met through the public purse. As business-class customers the party would have been offered courtesy champagne and a choice of wines to accompany their meals.

After landing, the party would barely have had a chance to glimpse the tropical sun before they transferred to 20-minute charter flights to La Digue. Each helicopter, carrying only four passengers, costs £1,000 to charter one way.

Downing Street sources had earlier said that Mr Blair planned to spend Christmas at Chequers, the Prime Minister's country retreat. However, Mr Blair let slip to journalists two days before Christmas that he might take the family

away for a few days if the opportunity presented itself.

Labour sources, aware that traditional party supporters may not appreciate the sight of the Prime Minister soaking up the Indian Ocean sun, were at pains to point out that the holiday would give Mr Blair a well-earned rest and provide a chance to spend time with his children.

In addition, Mr Blair also intends to have talks with Seychelles government officials. He made the acquaintance of President René during the recent Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Edinburgh.

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Patten eyes new role as mayor of London

By VALERIE ELLIOTT, WHITEHALL EDITOR

CHRIS PATTEN admitted publicly for the first time last night that he might like to become the elected mayor of London "if the job was right".

But the last Governor of Hong Kong added that if the job were wrong, no politician of any class from any party would be interested.

In an interview with *The Times* Mr Patten said: "No one knows what the job is going to be. If it is just a bit of political under-chiming or choosing someone who will be a transmission mechanism for decisions taken by Gordon Brown or John Prescott, then it is going to be difficult to find politicians and non-politicians from the left, right and centre, of real class who would want to do it."

"It does depend — not just for me, but for other people, too — on what the job looks like. I am sure, however, if the job is right — and if it is true the Conservative Party will run a London-wide primary to choose a candidate — that would be an extremely attractive thing to do."

Mr Patten, in London to oversee the decorating of his new family home in Barnes, conceded that he "liked running things" and said that he might be interested in further jobs in the public service. But he is clearly undecided about his political future, and whether he should try to return to Westminster as an MP.

That is the 110 per cent, 18-carat honest answer. I really have not come to a firm conclusion and I don't want to seem to be grand about it. The notion that Conservative grandees can be

parachuted into constituencies has been exploded with regular hilarity. You try and get parachuted in and you end up breaking both legs."

He was also keen to kill any speculation that he intended to stand against William Hague for the Conservative Party leadership. Mr Hague would lead the party "for a very long time", he said, adding: "No one has ever discussed the Tory leadership with me and if they were to attempt to do so, they would get short shrift. I think one of the things the Conservative Party has to realise is the importance of self-discipline and loyalty."

His own future will depend largely on what happens to the family's beloved Norfolk terriers, Whisky and Soda. Mr Patten is determined to continue his campaign to reverse the quarantine rules which prevent him bringing them home. In the meantime, the pets are being looked after by "kind, dog-loving" friends near the Patten's country house in southwest France.

"The extent to which we can base ourselves back in Britain will be affected in part by the quarantine regulations. Without our dogs, life would be very difficult. I certainly do not want to put them in quarantine. It is such a stupid policy, with no scientific basis for it any more." Pointedly referring to the death in quarantine of the former Governor of Bermuda's dog, he added: "People say you should not be sloppy about animals but they become part of the family."

Patten interview, page 2



Chris and Lavender Patten with their daughter's cocker spaniel C-Lo. Their own dogs are in France

Prisons chief to head Maze murder inquiry

By AUDREY MAGEE, IRELAND CORRESPONDENT

THE Northern Ireland office sought to restore confidence in security at the Maze last night by appointing the Chief Inspector of Prisons for England and Wales to inspect the jail after the murder of loyalist leader Billy Wright.

General Sir David Ramsbotham will investigate Saturday's killing by members of the Irish National Liberation Army (INLA) and how the weapons used to murder Wright, known as "King Rat", were smuggled into the supposedly high security jail on the outskirts of Belfast. He will report to the Government.

The appointment is part of a plan to tighten up security at the prison announced by Adam Ingram, the Northern Ireland Security Minister, during a press conference in the Maze yesterday.

Random weekly searches are being introduced immediately, it was announced. An inquiry into the escape of IRA man Liam Averil before Christmas will be extended to include the shooting of Wright. Mr Ingram said that the new measures, decided

upon during yesterday's conference of security and prison chiefs chaired by Mo Mowlam, the Northern Ireland Secretary, was designed to "do everything possible to prevent a repetition" of events such as the Wright killing. He said that there were no plans for resignations.

But the new measures will do little to satisfy Northern Irish community leaders, who complain bitterly that the prison system is lax and too greatly concerned with placating the jail's 560 republican and loyalist prisoners.

Finlay Spratt, chairman of the Northern Ireland Prison Officers' Association, welcomed the appointment of Sir David Ramsbotham but criticised the way the Maze has operated.

He said there should have already been regular random weekly searches. By announcing their introduction now the authorities were "damned by their own statement". The last full inspection of the prison was in July, after which loyalists set fire to their wing in

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Voting delayed

Voting in Kenya's elections was extended by a further 24 hours in some areas after flooding and accusations of vote-rigging. Page 9

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Plea to Straw as reporter in drugs exposé is arrested

By STEWART TENDLER, CRIME CORRESPONDENT

THE *Mirror* journalist who claimed to have bought drugs from a senior minister's son was arrested yesterday for possession of cannabis.

Dawn Allford, 30, was arrested when she arrived at Kennington police station in south London with another *Mirror* journalist and a lawyer to give police the cannabis and make a statement. She was bailed until February.

Miss Allford was arrested on the advice of the Crown Prosecution Service, apparently because of the length of time the drugs were held. The alternative would have been to question her under caution and release her.

The *Mirror* reported on Christmas Eve that she had been sold 1.92 grams of cannabis resin in a south London public house by the 17-year-old son of a Cabinet minister. The youth, who has not been named because of his age, was taken to a police station by his parent, arrested and released on police bail.

A police file on the whole case could be delivered to the

CPS within the next week. The general policy for minor drug offences is for the police to issue a caution, but if Miss Allford were charged and convicted, she would probably face a small fine.

Last night Piers Morgan, the editor of the *Daily Mirror*, attacked the decision to arrest his reporter and said that he would be appealing to Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, to intervene. Mr Morgan said: "This is an outrageous decision which is, in my opinion, specifically designed to deflect attention from the criminal activities of a Cabinet minister's son to the entirely justifiable methods deployed by a newspaper to uncover them."

He said the youth was not entrapped or "set up", but freely offered to supply cannabis and had admitted the criminal offence.

Mr Morgan said: "Our reporter was handed the substance at 11.30pm in a London pub and took it to a forensic laboratory the following morning to confirm it was cannabis. This is normal pro-

cedure and prevents newspapers wasting police time by taking them a series of Oxo cubes for examination in the middle of the night."

"Police have not to my knowledge ever questioned this procedure in the past, let alone considered an arrest for possessing the drug obtained in these circumstances."

The statement claimed that the investigating officer had accepted that there was no evidence Miss Allford had intended to keep the cannabis, but the decision to arrest her had been out of his hands. Mr Morgan added: "We will be appealing directly to the Home Secretary to launch an inquiry into this farcical situation."

The arrest of journalists taking part in undercover investigations into criminal activities is extremely rare. A number of reporters have bought drugs including cocaine and Ecstasy in order to expose traffickers, but they have not been prosecuted.

Libby Purves, page 14

Baby Noel's mother found living rough

By SIMON DE BRUXELLES

A WOMAN who abandoned her baby son at a council office two days before Christmas has been found wandering the streets in a confused state.

The mother, a married woman in her mid-20s, is, however, unlikely to be reunited with her son in the immediate future. The two-month-old child, whom police officers called Noel, spent Christmas with foster parents and is expected to join his mother's two other children in care.

Police said yesterday that

passers-by had alerted them to a woman wandering the streets of Totnes, in a distressed and dishevelled state on Sunday lunchtime. She had apparently been living rough since handing her son to staff at the Civic Centre in Plymouth, telling them she could not cope.

Although she told officers she was Noel's mother, her story was so confused that it took several hours to establish that it was true. She told police that the baby's father had walked out two months before he was born.

She is now being looked after by social services who are trying to assess whether she can care for the child. In the meantime, the baby will remain with his foster parents, who have now stopped calling him Noel and started using his real name.

Inspector David Evans said that the mother had expressed concern about the child, but had not asked to see him yet.

Officers who visited her Housing Association home in Plymouth described it as "clean and in good order".



Baby "Noel" is still with foster family

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Tories' forgotten man comes home to put his house in order

Chris Patten is back in town and already eyeing the political scene as he takes a year out to think and write a book, reports Valerie Elliott

CHRIS PATTEN, the former Governor of Hong Kong and Conservative Cabinet Minister, is back in town. Amid the tea chests and packing cases in his elegant new South London home overlooking Barnes Common, it is clear he is missing the political front line. But with an appearance on BBC's *Today* programme yesterday, and more television interviews next month, Mr Patten is not going to become the forgotten man of British politics. He has given himself a year to write a book about the tiger economies of Asia, to take time out and to think, but he stresses he has not made up his mind what comes next.

His wife, Lavender, unpacking belongings in their kitchen, was hesitant about a political comeback. "I'd rather not. We've been through all that. But you can't stop people doing what they want to do. We'll wait and see."

Perhaps the public most remember the Pattens in tears — on the night in 1992 when he lost his seat as MP for Bath, and again in June this year as the Union Flag came down for the last time over Hong Kong.

"The notion that Conservative grandees can be parachuted into constituencies has been exploded with regular hilarity. You try and get parachuted in and you end up breaking both legs," he said.

He would possibly like further jobs in the public service and said that he "liked running things". He is clearly intrigued at the possibility of standing as London's first elected mayor. "If I do decide to try to get back into Westminster politics, it's a big commitment. I would have to try to persuade an association to select me and to get re-elected."

Speaking around the old pine table in the kitchen of the four-storey mid-Victorian home — the only downstairs corner free from dust sheets — Mr Patten admitted he had received one or two approaches from constituency associations. "But as I have told people in public and private I wanted a year to write a book and to sort out my ideas. I am not going to make any snap decision on my future."

He has to write another 40,000 words of his book by

April; the study in his new home is ready. His days are spent writing — in longhand — with a break for lunch, followed by gardening or cycling, and then back to the pen at 4.30pm.

As he spoke, decorators were painstakingly brushing white paint on cornices and picture rails, and the Pattens' Filipino daily, Pearl, was getting the bedrooms shipshape.

Asked if he could work with William Hague, he immediately quipped: "Of course. I had a very good conversation with him in July when I last came back and I am meeting him in a few weeks' time. He is highly intelligent, he's already shown considerable capacity to take a longer-term view and is not being knocked out of his stride by unfair criticism. He is a good speaker and good in the House of Commons and will be leader of the Conservative Party for a very long time."

But would he feel comfortable with the present Conservative line-up on the backbenches? Were they his kind of Tories?

He spoke up for John Major who, he said, "will get very great notices in history", and Kenneth Clarke, "for whom I have the greatest respect".

"The Conservative Party has always had two wings. If you don't use both wings you don't get off the ground. You don't fly. I may have spent a few years in the Far East but I am never going to be anything other than a liberal Tory."

The Pattens hope to return from their French country house more permanently after Easter. Their plans will be determined largely by their peers. Whisky and Soda, Norfolk, the Pattens are determined to save from quarantine.

Mr Patten said: "Whisky especially has been unwell and has had an operation. We really cannot risk putting him in quarantine."

They are hoping the Government will change the existing regulations so they can be reunited as a family in their new home. For the moment the Pattens are enjoying the frolics of C-lo, a black and white cocker spaniel belonging to their daughter Laura.



The public may most remember Chris Patten in tears, above at the handover of Hong Kong to China in June

Large blue and white Chinese pots awaiting plants and two elephant stools lined the terrace. They were reminders of a world away but Mr Patten showed he was still engrossed in British politics, and the debate on welfare reform.

Tony Blair, he claimed, was addressing "a Conservative agenda" in his bid to reform the welfare state. It was not surprising this had "amazed and confused his traditional supporters".

But Mr Patten said he had always believed that the welfare state needed tackling, if

ever the country was "to get a grip on the inexorable rise in public spending" and added that Mr Blair should tackle the problem on a cross-party basis.

"The difficulty for the Labour Party, however, is that they are being consensual on alternate days. On Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, it's the Government of all the people, and on the other days Mr Campbell [Alastair Campbell, Mr Blair's press secretary] and others are lambasting their opponents."

He said welfare reform was

Mr Blair's "big test". "He is a very intelligent and perceptive politician and he must know that the real question people have in their mind is if he stands for anything other than winning the next election."

"I think the sensible thing in the national interest is to assure the country they are serious on welfare reform. If they are not the results will be sad for the country and damaging to the Labour Government."

The Tories had already put the building-blocks in place for welfare reform, he said.

"But let's not forget that if the Tory Government had tried to do this they would have been denounced by the Labour Opposition up hill and down dale. That to some extent undermines the moral authority of Labour doing the job, and particularly with the wobbles in the Labour Party over it."

Mrs Patten did not rule out a return to the Bar, but was keeping an open mind. "I must do something," she said. She probably already foresees the dawn of a second era as political wife.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Drugged girl foils airport kidnap bid

Police were last night guarding a teenage girl after she thwarted an apparent attempt to drug her and smuggle her out of the country. It is understood that the girl, who lives in Bradford, comes from a family living in Pakistan. Her parents had taken exception to a relationship she had formed with a man in Yorkshire, but she had rejected their requests for her to break it off and return home.

The 17-year-old was allegedly given sleeping pills in a drink on Sunday evening and driven to Manchester Airport. She came round at the departure lounge and alerted officials before she could be forced on to a flight to Islamabad.

Last night Greater Manchester Police charged two men from the same address in Bradford with false imprisonment and administering a noxious substance. They were released on police bail to appear before magistrates in Manchester on January 27.

Bishop condemns Blair

The Bishop of Aston in the Birmingham diocese, the Right Rev John Austin, one of many Church of England leaders who welcomed Labour's election victory, has condemned the Government for failing to help the worst-off in society. The bishop, formerly head of the board for social responsibility in the London diocese, said that Tony Blair was using language "almost indistinguishable" from his Conservative predecessors.

Lone mothers' hostels

Youth workers voiced support for a Government plan to house single mothers in hostels equipped with training units and creches as part of an initiative to help them find work. Under the scheme, which is being examined by Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, the women would live in blocks of flats equipped with creches, job clubs and computer training facilities. They are known as "foyer" projects, taking their name from a French scheme.

Beef ban 'unjustified'

The producer of television's most popular cookery programmes has denounced the Government's handling of the beef-on-the-bone crisis as "the most pathetic example of scientific confusion" in a series of unfounded health scares. Peter Bazalgette, who produces *Food and Drink*, *Can't Cook*, *Wanted* and *Ready, Steady, Cook*, said there was no scientific justification for banning beef on the bone and fear of consumer prejudice was driving decisions.

Climber saved by snow

A climber who fell 100ft down a sheer rock face survived when his fall was cushioned by a fresh blanket of snow, rescuers said yesterday. Karl Follbrook, 28, a chemist from Snellsmore Common, Berkshire, suffered a broken leg and smashed knee when he slipped while making his way off the 2,700ft summit of Aonach Eagach in Glencoe on Sunday. The fresh snow is also thought to have acted as a brake to prevent him from falling further.

Heart veteran dies

One of Britain's longest-living heart transplant patients has died after suffering a supernumerary car park on Christmas Eve. Steven Delton, 34, died on the 13th anniversary of the day he was allowed home from hospital after his operation. It is thought he suffered a heart attack. His former wife, Angie, 37, from Beccles, Walsall, West Midlands, said he had lived his life to the full, and had enjoyed the 13 extra years of life.

New union launched

The biggest union for civil servants will be launched in the New Year, promising New Labour-style pledges to improve services to its members. The 260,000-strong Public and Commercial Services union (PCS), which has been formed through the merger of the PSC and CPSA unions, aims to be more "member-centred" and has promised the rank and file will have the final say on major decisions such as pay.

Cartoon warning

Three cartoon characters inspired by the hit film *Toy Story* are spearheading a Government television campaign to cut the number of accidents caused by dangerous toys. The cartoonists, the brothers with the sales where bargain hunters may be tempted to place cost above safety. The video warns parents that 36,000 children and a similar number of adults are injured by toys each year.

Diana letter 'forgery'

A letter suggesting that Diana, Princess of Wales, had been two months pregnant when she died was denounced as a forgery yesterday by hospital officials. The letter, published in *Intervista*, a Spanish news magazine, purports to be a doctor's report to Jean-Pierre Chevenement, the French Interior Minister, on a post-mortem examination at the Pitié-Salpêtrière hospital, where the Princess died.

£1,300 teddy bear stolen

An 8ft tall teddy bear dressed as a Buckingham Palace guard and weighing about 10 stone has been stolen. The £1,300 toy was taken from the Teddy Bear Shop in Birmingham City Centre. Manageress Wendy Baffey said she was amazed the bear had gone missing. "The bear stands guard at the door and can only be carried by two people. There's no way it would fit in a car."

£10,000 grant for otters

Wildlife experts have won a £10,000 grant to lure the otter back to the Yorkshire Dales. The money will provide suitable habitats at nine secret locations along the River Wharfe. The last otters in the area were killed by pollution during the 1940s. Half the money comes from the Millennium Trust; the rest from the Environment Agency, Yorkshire Water, Yorkshire Electricity and landowners.

Question of allegiance in quangos vetting

By Valerie Elliott, Whitehall Editor

PEOPLE applying for posts on public bodies and quangos could face tougher political vetting under plans being considered by Sir Len Peach, the Public Appointments Commissioner.

They might be asked how they voted at the election, whether they belong to a political party and if they have given any cash to a political party, over what period, and if it is above £250, £500 or £1,000.

But Sir Len Peach is concerned that far too many political questions will deter many people from applying for public appointments while his aim is to widen the net of potential recruits to the various bodies.

However he wants to test if people are being asked the right questions about political activity or whether a more intense grilling is necessary.

Before reaching any firm conclusions on future vetting Sir Len is to order a political survey next month of 300 people who have been ap-

pointed to NHS Trusts and various other public bodies since the Labour Government came to power.

He wants to find out exactly what political activity they undertook before applying and being appointed to a post.

He was concerned that a survey of appointments last year showed that only 10.3 per cent of those appointed admitted to any political activity and is anxious to ascertain if this is a true picture of appointments or if it represents an underestimate.

His move also follows a recommendation from Lord Nolan, the former public standards watchdog, who suggested that people should be asked about any "significant political activity" undertaken.

Lord Nolan ruled out however asking people how they voted at the last election or whether they belonged to a political party on grounds of privacy.

But in his final report last summer before stepping down as chairman of the Committee

on Standards in Public Life, Lord Nolan had suggested that "political activity" in applications for public appointments was "too narrowly defined."

Anyone applying for an appointment is already quizzed about any political activity but there has been concern that the questions do not show if someone has canvassed for a party or given cash donations.

The present political vetting is also limited to the past five years and there is some concern that it should relate to a longer timespan.

Frank Dobson, the Health Secretary, yesterday rejected Tory claims that he is throwing business people off NHS trusts and replacing them with Labour supporters.

After Conservatives released details of people who have allegedly been removed from health trusts, Mr Dobson declared: "I'm not interested in replacing Tory deadheads" with Labour deadheads.

Maze killing inquiry

Continued from page 1

protest at the stricter regime. While not calling for resignations, Mr Spratt demanded a full review of the Government's attitude to the prison and prisoners.

"Those people responsible for running the Northern Ireland Prison Service have to examine their consciences, they have been making concessions after concession to the inmates," he said.

He claimed that the concessions, influenced by the Northern Irish peace talks, had resulted in a prison officer being removed from watchtower duty on Saturday to allow Wright and other loyalist prisoners to meet their family in private. The guard's absence allowed Wright's killers climb over the roof unopposed.

Martin Mogg, the prison's senior governor, admitted that the new weekly searches would have to be carried out with the co-operation of the prisoners. But he said he would not ask permission from prisoners' leaders and added: "If they do not cooperate I will have no option but to suspend visits for so long as they are opposing the searches."



Ramsbotham, left, will report to the Government on the killing of Billy Wright, right, in the Maze

But the prospect of a tougher regime is likely to be met with anger in the prison, particularly by the loyalist prisoners already disgruntled at the murder of one of their leaders.

John White, prisons spokesman for the Ulster Democratic Party, said he would be fearful of the consequences of "collective punishment".

He is due to meet UDA and other prisoners in the Maze today to discuss the security situation.



Ramsbotham, left, will report to the Government on the killing of Billy Wright, right, in the Maze

Wright's murder appeared in Lisburn Magistrates' Court amid tight security yesterday.

Christopher Michael Patrick McWilliams, 35; John Martin Gerard Kennaway, 35; and John Glennon, 32, whose addresses were all given as the Maze prison, were also each charged with the possession of two firearms, a Derringer .22 pistol, and a PA63 handgun and a quantity of ammunition.

They were remanded in custody to the Maze to reappear in the prison court on January 14.

Three men charged with

Website omits Mandelson and keeps dome in the distance

By Dominic Kennedy

THE Millennium Commission is spending £750,000 to take the Green-which dome off the map. A new official website, being announced today, features a full-colour graphic of the United Kingdom giving a regional breakdown of how much is being spent in each part of the country.

But the dome, which is taking £449 million of lottery players' money, is missing. The commission has hired the image consultants Lloyd Northover Clegg to explain how it spends 5.6p of every National Lottery £1.75 — might start by print-

ing out that this public relations blitz is costing lottery players up to £250,000 a year for the next three years, under the terms of their contract. The nine commissioners, led by Chris Smith, the Culture Secretary, are keen to tell the public about the many worthy causes they support and to escape from what one official described as "the shadow of the dome".

During an exclusive preview, *The Times* quickly realized what a thorough job the consultants had done. A surfer could spend hours browsing on the website without finding a mention of Greenwich. As for Peter

Mandelson, the Minister Without Portfolio who is hosting the year-long extravaganza on the Meridian, there is not a peep.

When the Home page is called up, a capital "M", the Millennium Commission's new logo, rises from behind an orange slash in the top left-hand corner of the screen. We clicked the "News" icon to find only two items, one announcing the new website, the other dealing with a "National Space Centre" in Leicester.

Next, the map. This has orange squares for each major project. There were two in London. We clicked on the easternmost and summoned a

picture of the Tate Gallery of Modern Art. The western square was the British Museum Great Court.

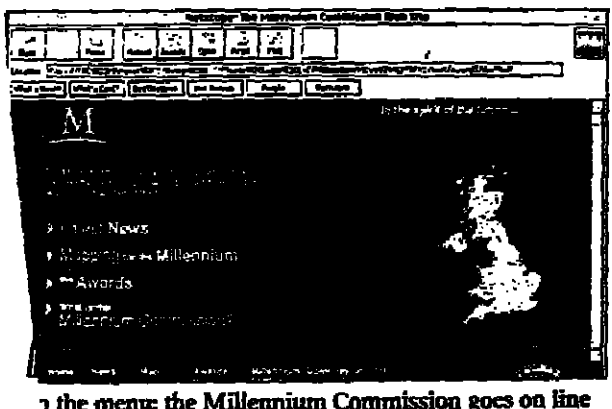
Clicking on the "Awards", we read about grants of £2,000 or more which go to individuals for self-improvement. These were illustrated with a picture of women waving their hands in the air.

Turning to "What is the Millennium Commission?", the same ecstatic someone had remembered to put a caption underneath. The photograph was showing The first 120 successful Millennium Awards Scheme individuals celebrate the

announcement of their Millennium Awards.

Here at last there was a brief mention of Greenwich. Another passing reference to the Dome was found by clicking "Millennium Festival". This would be held in the dome.

The commission's website is at <http://www.millennium.gov.uk>. Britain is leading a drive to stop the Internet being used for secret links between gangs including paedophile-rings and terrorist networks. Jack Straw, the Home Secretary, plans to use Britain's EU presidency to give security services wider powers.



the menu: the Millennium Commission goes on line

Palm-fringed estate where a legend was porn

By STEPHEN FARRELL

THE ISLAND

LA DIGUE, the holiday destination chosen by Tony Blair, is one of the most beautiful of the Seychelles archipelago, 1,000 miles off the coast of Africa.

The Blairs are staying as paying guests of President France Albert René at a traditional plantation house on the L'Union estate in the south-west of the island where the soft-porn film *Emmanuelle* was shot in the 1970s.

The plantation house where they are staying is a low-set colonial building with overhanging palm thatch roof providing shade, set in a dense grove of palm trees.

When the sun shines the Blairs will enjoy temperatures of about 30C (86F) in a part of the world renowned for tranquillity and exotic flora. But the islands have their heaviest rainfall at this time of year with an average of 13in in December and 11in in January.

The Blairs are staying 15 minutes' ride from La Digue Pier, where tourists arrive from Mahé and Praslin to be taken to their hotels and self-catering chalets by ox cart.

The plantation house is not usually rented to the public and is available only to personal guests of the President. Recent visitors include the

King of Sweden. A family of five enjoying similar luxury a few hundred yards away at the exclusive La Digue Island Lodge, through the package operators Knoch, would have to pay £16,620 half-board for ten nights. Flying business class from Gatwick, as the Blairs did, Mother-in-law would cost another £3,324.

Less affluent families can stay in self-catering chalets on the island for £28 per adult half-board but most of the visitors are day trippers arriving to snorkel off spectacular pink sand beaches and admire the distinctive granite boulder formations, one of the most famous being the Anse Source d'Argent.

Rose Rayon, regional manager for the Seychelles Tourist Office, said: "La Digue is very well known. All the posters of the Seychelles with the granite boulders are of the island. It is very friendly and laid back, somewhere people go to relax because it is not very exposed to tourism."

The local cuisine is Creole, a mixture of French cooking with Indian, Chinese and African influences, and tourists dine on red snapper, marlin and dishes of spicy pork.

curried chicken and octopus. Birds and sealife provide the other main attractions on La Digue.

Fishing and tourism are the main sources of income for the island's 2,000 inhabitants. Ox cart and bicycle are the main means of transport on the 10 sq km island, the third largest of the Seychelles in population and fourth in size.

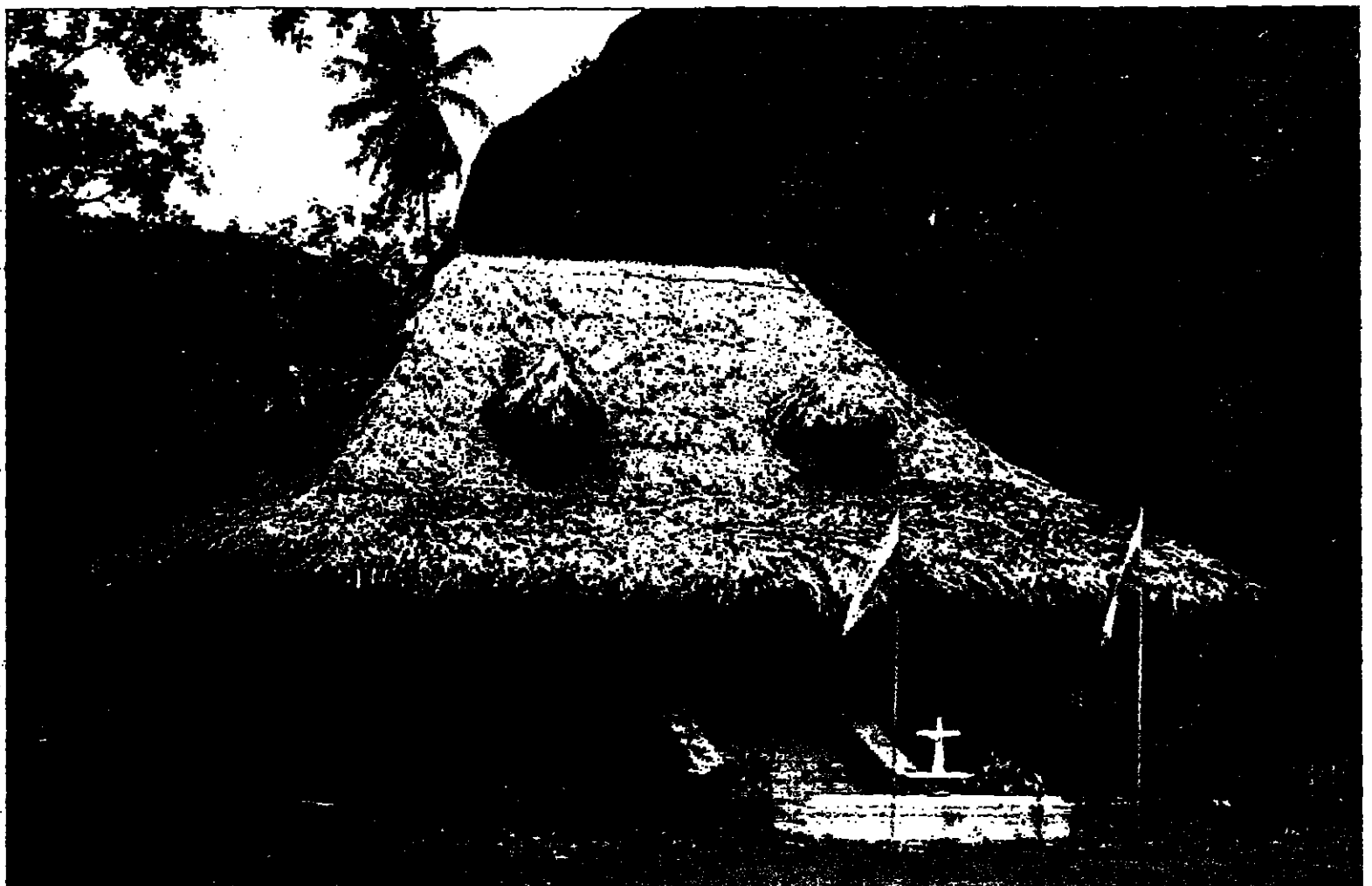
The highest point, Nid D'Aigle (Eagle's Nest) is only 1,000ft above sea level, making it an ideal walk and picnic site for a young family.

The island is surrounded by a reef and the flat interior areas are filled with plantations growing vanilla, almonds and coffee and the only town of any size is La Réunion.

The island was discovered in 1768 by Marion Dufresne and named after one of his ships. Early settlers had to cope with crocodiles, lizards and snakes and by 1777 only seven families lived there.

The Flycatcher Reserve, founded by the chocolate industrialist Christopher Cadbury, was set up to protect the Seychelles' black paradise flycatcher.

The island crops include vanilla and the L'Union estate itself produces high grade copra, or dried coconut. The young Blairs can while away a



The plantation house on the L'Union estate where the Blairs are staying. The soft-porn film *Emmanuelle* was shot on the estate in the 1970s

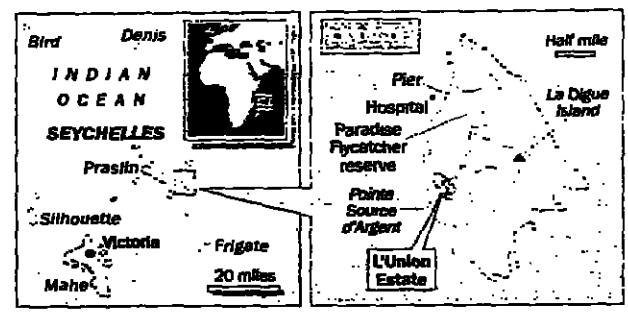
few hours inspecting the calorifer for drying the coconut meat, and an ox-drawn coconut oil press used to produce the sun lotion they will be needing in somewhat greater quantities than during their Christmas break at Cheques.

Elsewhere they can find tame giant land tortoises and terrapins. Inland the island becomes

marshy in an area known as La Mare Souape, where bamboo grows and cattle graze near a river beneath takamaka and Indian almond trees. When bored on land, they can windsurf, take to glass-bottomed boat to inspect the coral, watch mum and dad learn to scuba dive or look out to the La Digue cross, erected in 1931 by a Swiss priest in memory of sailors who died

trying to reach the island. On other islands tourists pay £1,500 for a week's big game fishing or to laze on outlying palm tree clusters such as Bird Island and Silhouette.

The first-class hotels near by boast games rooms and beachfront swimming pools with bar stools allowing customers to order drinks without leaving the water.



Former Marxist with a new line in capitalism

By MICHAEL BRYNION AND RAY KENNEDY

THE HOST



President René

ALBERT RENÉ, President of the Seychelles and Tony Blair's host, is a man who has moved even further than the Prime Minister from Left to Right.

But the former Marxist, who ran a one-party state for 15 years, has now so heartily embraced the world of private finance that world leaders have given a warning that his country is in danger of becoming a haven for drug dealers and money launderers.

President René was a controversial figure before he embraced multi-party democracy and won a 60 per cent majority in the 1993 elections. As Prime Minister in 1977, he deposed Sir James Mancham, the country's first president after independence, during a bloodless coup in which Tanzania played a considerable part.

Strong-arm tactics were used to deal with dissenters. Gérard Horeau, a leading political dissident, was assassinated in London after his involvement in a bungled coup in 1981, the most bizarre

of several attempts to overthrow President René's Government. It was carried out by a group of South African mercenaries, disguised as members of a beer-drinking club called The Ancient Order of Froth Blowers. Their leader was Colonel "Mad" Mike Hoare, a veteran of mercenary campaigns in the Congo in the 1960s. The 44-strong group flew into Victoria, the Seychelles capital, on a civilian flight from Swaziland with assault rifles and ammunition

supplied by the South African Army hidden in their "Froth Blowers" holdalls. But one of them made the mistake of going through the red channel at customs, his bag was searched and the ruse uncovered. For several hours the South Africans tried to shoot their way out of the airport but were pinned down by Seychelles troops backed by well-trained Tanzanians who had remained in the islands since Mr René seized power.

The strangest part of the episode was the manner of the South Africans' escape. Colonel Hoare and his men hijacked an Air India Boeing that landed at Victoria supposedly unaware of the fierce fighting going on below. They forced the pilot to fly to Durban in South Africa where they were arrested and charged under air piracy laws. Most were sentenced to prison; all were freed after short periods.

After that episode the economy declined and with the collapse of communism, aid from Eastern Europe and the Soviet Union dried up. Baroness Chalker of Wallasey, then Overseas Development Minister, summed up Britain's attitude in the House of Commons: "We regard the Seychelles as a one-party socialist state which exercises undue restrictions on freedom of association and of expression. We are not in business to help a Government of that kind."

President René, a graduate of King's College London, who was called to the Bar in 1957, changed course, discarded his socialist clothes and set out to woo Western investors. Tourism increased rapidly, and now accounts for 70 per cent of foreign earnings. However, about 20 per cent of the islanders live in poverty.

President René, 62, has announced that he will stand again for office for the last time next year. Few doubt that he will win with a landslide. He has brought prosperity and national attention to the 115 scattered islands with his plan to turn it into an offshore financial services and investment centre.



The tranquil beaches mask a turbulent interior

Money laundering soils image as tourist paradise

By STEWART TENDLER CRIME CORRESPONDENT

BLACK ECONOMY

THE Seychelles were once a haven for pirates and their buried treasure. Two hundred years later look is still being hidden there, but now by money launderers.

The Seychelles are regarded by international investigators as one of about 40 offshore paradises that have become magnets for dirty money. A study by the Group of Eight economic powers last year estimated that the combined black economies of these countries controlled up to \$2.5 trillion. The cash

comes from organised crime including drug trafficking and vice, also tax dodging and government bribery and corruption. The Seychelles like other havens offers a relaxed banking system and a lenient tax regime with few questions asked.

Last year the Government, suffering an economic crisis, sought to increase its share. An economic development Act offered anyone investing \$10 million immunity from prosecution by any country for all offences unless they

committed violence or drug trafficking in the Seychelles themselves. They could also be given Seychelles diplomatic passports.

Drug barons and gangsters began making travel arrangements for their cash. But within three months the legislation had been shelved after international outcry and a warning to banks from investigators for the Group of Eight.

There were also suspicions last year that some of the islands in the Seychelles were being used to store drugs in transit but nothing has been proved by UN investigators.

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Nature-lover fined for pruning her tree

Michael Hornsby reports on the £2,500 cost of cutting back a sycamore

A LIFELONG nature-lover and horticulturist has been branded a criminal and fined £400, plus £100 costs, for pruning a tree in her garden without getting planning permission.

Mary Edwards, aged 63, who was found guilty just before Christmas by magistrates in Cromer, Norfolk, also faces a solicitor's bill of £1,500 on top of the £540 she paid to a tree surgeon to do the job.

Her crime was to cut about half a dozen branches off the top of a 40 ft sycamore, one of Britain's most ubiquitous trees, in a corner of her Edwin Lutyens-designed house in the coastal village of Overstrand.

Mrs Edwards, who has lived in the house with her husband since 1969, says she was not aware that her section of the village was part of a conservation area or that she needed the approval of North Norfolk District Council for the work to be done. "The

sycamore is in a windy corner and I decided to lop some branches off the top to give it a better chance in a gale," she said yesterday. "Some of the branches were also diseased."

"It never occurred to me that I needed permission to do this in my own garden."

"No one ever wrote to us, or told us, that we were in a conservation area. There was nothing in the house deeds about it. In the past the old gardener we then had used to prune trees occasionally and no complaint was ever made. This is bureaucracy gone mad."

Mrs Edwards had the work done in February. The council decided to prosecute after being tipped off by another resident of the village, although Mrs Edwards does not know who this was.

"If I was a hooligan and had cut down a tree, then I would deserve to be fined," she said. "I have been a horticulturist for the last 40 years. I would

no more hurt a tree than jump off a cliff."

"I hired the tree surgeon at great expense to make the tree healthier. That is exactly what he has done. The council told me this was a conservation area — funny, for the last 26 years I thought it was my garden."

Mike Terry, the council's Assistant Chief Planning Officer, was unrepentant about the prosecution: "Mrs Edwards took a fair chunk out of the top of the tree, considerably reducing its value as a visual amenity," he said. "The court agreed with us that the tree had not benefited from her attentions."

"In any case, under the Town and Country Planning Act, she should not have undertaken any work without permission. That part of the village has been in a conservation area since 1978. The parish council would have been notified, and notices about the change of status

would have been placed in local newspapers."

Mrs Edwards would have earned the plaudits of many foresters and conservationists had she gone further and cut down the whole tree. The sycamore, *Acer pseudo-platanus*, a native of central Europe imported to Britain about 400 years ago, is widely regarded as something of a menace.

In woods it spreads rapidly by seed at the expense of other trees. Its saplings can live for many years in shade, which few indigenous trees are able to do, and the dense litter formed by its leathery leaves suppresses woodland flowers and deters birds and other wildlife.

In his *The History of the Countryside*, Oliver Rackham, the Cambridge botanist, writes that the sycamore "is a tree which no responsible person should plant without carefully considering the long-term consequences".



Mary Edwards and the sycamore: "It never occurred to me that I needed permission"

Guardian of stately homes is dead at 89

By Philip Davies
Broughton

JAMES Lees-Milne, whose conservation work for the National Trust saved many of Britain's great stately homes, and whose waspish diaries made the occupants of those houses squirm, died on Sunday. He was 89.

Mr Lees-Milne worked for the National Trust's Country Houses Committee, which was set up in 1936, and persuaded the inhabitants of houses such as Cliveden, Nostell Priory and West Wycombe Park that, with the help of the Trust, their houses could be saved.

Although his critics called him a snob, Mr Lees-Milne preferred to be called an astute observer of class distinction. His books on architecture included *Ancestral Voices* and *Caves of Ice*.

Leading article, page 15
Obituary, page 17

Father kills himself after shooting his disturbed son

By Lin Jenkins

THE family of a man who committed suicide after shooting his psychologically disturbed teenage son yesterday said that lack of professional help had led to the tragedy.

They claimed that the incessant demands of caring for Philip Carter, 16, who suffered from an obsession with cleanliness, caused his father Gerald to snap.

After a family row on Sunday the boy ripped up a book. His father lost control, got his shotgun and shot his son in the stomach. He then dialled 999 to confess his crime and summon help before walking into the garden of their bungalow home in Chichester, West Sussex, and shooting himself dead.

Philip was yesterday said to be comfortable in St Richard's Hospital, Chichester, after undergoing 2½ hours of emergency surgery. His mother Christina, 46, was distraught and remained with relatives. She told her sister-in-law: "I have nothing to live for."

Mrs Carter had planned to take Philip to the doctor yesterday because his obsessive compulsive disorder had deteriorated over Christmas. His condition meant he would wash his hands constantly, complain that his clothes were dirty even after three washes and demand new shoes if he trod in dog mess. He insisted that the house be kept spotless.

His aunt Tina Carter, 50, a paediatric nurse, said she blamed the lack of psychological treatment and support for the family for the shooting. Philip's condition meant he had rituals and routines of ultra-cleanliness. "It drove his father to the limits. I think it would have pushed anyone

too far because you just don't know how to help the child. It is a very difficult problem and it could make him very aggressive. He needs psychological special care but when he finished his education in the summer he came home and his parents were dealing with the problem without any back-up."

Philip began showing signs of problems from the age of six, throwing tantrums and being disruptive. At the age of 11, after just a few weeks at Chichester High School, he was assessed as having special educational needs and sent to Meadows School in Turbridge Wells, Kent, run by the charity Barnardo's.

During school holidays his parents received help from the social services in caring for their only son, but the support ended in October 1995 when Philip appeared to be fairly stable.

Mrs Carter said that her nephew had recently become worse. She added: "He would not know how far to go with his parents. I felt very sorry for him. Philip used to talk to his Dad a lot but things got worse. I think he could not go through it all again."

The shooting happened when the boy's mother was visiting friends. "I think something happened to him with the boy. He tore up this book and his father just flipped."

Mrs Carter yesterday visited her nephew in hospital, where he had been told of his father's suicide. "He was cool and calm. I don't think it has sunk in yet."

West Sussex County Council said it had not been contacted since October 1995 when social service support ended by mutual agreement.

Christmas drove mother crackers

By A Correspondent

A MOTHER pushed to breaking point by the stresses and strains of a family Christmas was held in police cells for a night after her patience with her three children and husband finally snapped.

Sarah Hughes, 32, dumped the family's presents in the bin and ripped down the decorations. She slammed the front door, shattering the glass, and when her husband, Michael, 33, said he was calling the police she cut the telephone wires and tried to slash the tyres on his car.

Eventually two police officers arrived at the family's home in Redcar, and arrested her for a breach of the peace. After a night in custody she appeared in court yesterday and told magistrates: "I could do without Christmas."

Mrs Hughes, who has been married for ten years, blamed her husband and the children,

aged 9, 6 and 3, for her loss of control. "I love my kids and I wouldn't hurt them," she said, "but they had thrown the toys everywhere for two days after Christmas and they didn't deserve them. I got annoyed. I threw some of them in the bin. My husband sometimes drives me to distraction. I can hurt him by shouting and ranting."

She added: "Christmas has been a big thing in it. I could do without Christmas."

Janet Brisley, for the prosecution, told Teesside Magistrates in Middlesbrough: "She is taking medication, and her husband said that leading up to Christmas she was becoming progressively worse."

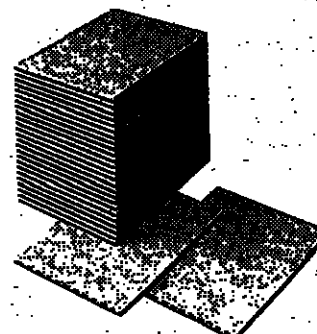
Mrs Hughes, who admitted breaching the peace, was bound over in the sum of £25 for three months. She responded: "Thank you very much."

January's Big Deals

January offer of the month.

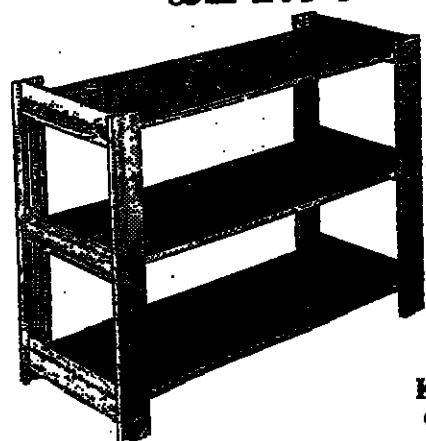
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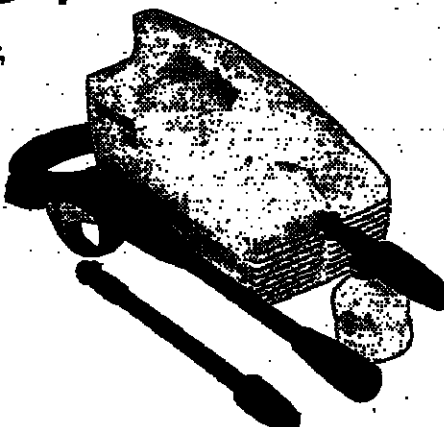


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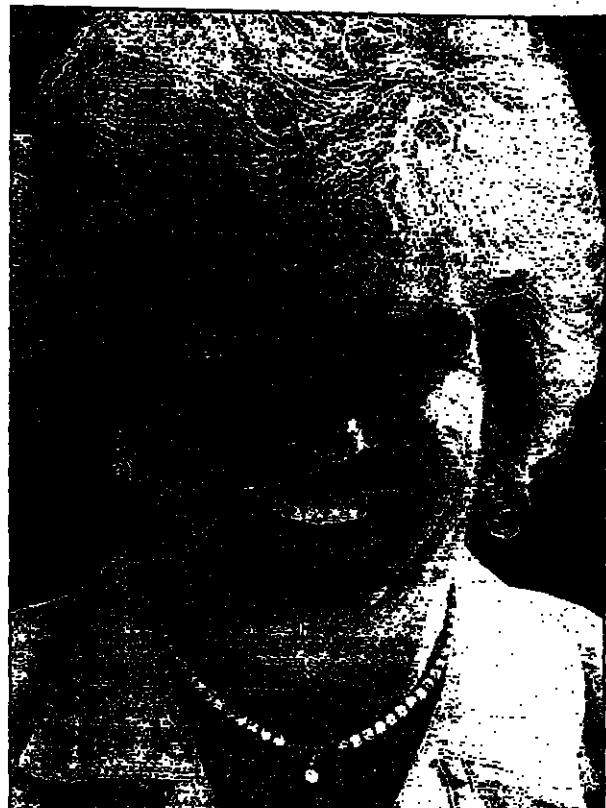


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Brain of Britain gives Mastermind a sore head



Daphne Fowler: says she cannot tell left from right

RADIO'S Brain of Britain has routed television's Mastermind. Daphne Fowler, a mother of five who dropped out of university more than 40 years ago, beat the reigning Mastermind champion Anne Ashurst by 35 points to 15 in a head-to-head contest.

The victory was the pinnacle of a quiz career during which Mrs Fowler has scaled new heights in trivia, from representing Britain in a *Sale of the Century* international to winning a car and cash prizes totalling £20,000.

For the first time in the Mastermind contest between the victors of the two BBC quiz shows, the competitors were both women, and by coincidence both live in Somerset, although they had never met. They were born within a year of each other, are stalwarts of their pub quiz teams, left school with seven O levels and are self-confessed scatterbrains.

Mrs Fowler has trouble telling her right from her left and claims she had to write R and L on her hands to pass her driving test. She says she never goes shopping without a detailed list because she is

Self-confessed scatterbrains clash in first 'play-off' between women winners of TV and radio shows. Simon de Bruxelles keeps score

terribly forgetful. Mrs Ashurst, 59, was forced by teachers to give up mathematics at 13 because she was hopeless. After her victory, which was broadcast on Radio 4 yesterday, Mrs Fowler, 58, said: "I'm thrilled to win against Anne, as Mastermind has finished and she was the last winner. It's a shame because although I've won a lot of quiz games I always wanted to have a go at Mastermind."

The competitors in yesterday's Mastermind quiz, which was hosted by the veteran question master Robert Robinson, also included the runners-up in Mastermind and Brain of Britain. Mrs Fowler made a flying start, getting all her general knowledge questions right, and was soon picking up

extra points as her competitors answered wrongly. The retired secretary from Weston-super-Mare, North West Somerset, said: "There is a technique to using the buzzer when other people make mistakes which I don't think the others had mastered."

"I chose Agatha Christie's *Miss Marple* books for my subject and I worked really hard on it — there are 12 books and 20 short stories and I read them all at least twice and made endless notes."

Mrs Fowler added: "The answers just pop into my brain — I sometimes wonder where they come from. I don't consider myself very bright but I do have an abnormal knowledge question, right, and was soon picking up

quiz when he was question master. Mrs Ashurst, from Williton, near Taunton, finished last out of the four with 15 points. The Mills and Boon novelist who has written 50 books chose *Asterix the Gaul* as her specialist subject on Mastermind.

Mrs Ashurst admits to being "totally innumerate". She said: "I was lucky there were no maths questions on Mastermind."

The questions Mrs Fowler answered correctly to win the Mastermind title included:

- Which Italian city holds an art exhibition every other year known as the Biennale?
- The Eden is one of Britain's sizeable northward-flowing rivers. In which county does it reach the sea?
- Which duke is among Britain's five richest people?
- In describing a car what does the term OHC mean?
- The Greek or Turkish dish *Baclava* is made from flaky pastry, nuts, sugar, spices, butter and what other ingredient?

Answers: 1. Venice. 2. Cambridgeshire. 3. Westminster. 4. Overhead camshaft. 5. Honey.



Anne Ashurst: had to give up mathematics at 13

Couple blame hospital for baby son's death

By PAUL WILKINSON

A YOUNG mother gave birth to a son on a settee on Christmas Day two hours after a hospital had allegedly sent her home for the third time. The four-months-premature child named Callum survived for less than three hours, dying in the same hospital where his mother had gone for help.

Now the baby's family are demanding an inquiry and are consulting lawyers. They claim that staff at Doncaster Royal Infirmary in South Yorkshire failed to realise that Gemma White, 20, was in slow labour when she came in complaining about stomach pains on three different days. She was told she had a urinary infection and was given antibiotics.

Mrs White's parents, who say they helped deliver the boy in their front room, rejected a statement by the hospital's controlling NHS trust that Mrs White discharged herself against medical advice.

David Welch, her father, said: "It is all complete lies. My daughter did not ask to go

home. She wanted to stay in hospital because she was in pain. If they say she discharged herself, then I hope they have got plenty of forms as evidence. She did not fill any in."

In its statement the trust said it regretted the "unfortunate circumstances" surrounding Mrs White's case. "Her discharge was against the recommendation of the medical team but was permitted as she had an appointment booked for December 29. There was visual evidence of abnormal development of the baby but a post-mortem has been refused." The baby was delivered by trained paramedics, it said.

It continued: "Gemma was admitted on December 23 for over an hour and treated for a urinary infection. She was readmitted on December 25 but she asked to go home after around five hours of further treatment and investigation when symptoms had ceased."

The statement made no mention of her claimed visit on Christmas Eve. It said that

an incubator was not necessary when the baby arrived. Five years ago the maternity unit at Doncaster Royal Infirmary in South Yorkshire was cleared of negligence after the parents of 34 babies born over a 10-year period complained that inadequate treatment had left their children brain-damaged. Two of them died. One family later received a £1.25 million settlement after their son was left handicapped.

Mr Welch continued: "The baby's head and shoulders were out by the time the paramedics walked in."

The family says that the hospital knew Mrs White was experiencing difficulties with her pregnancy after a scan two weeks earlier. The day before Christmas Eve she returned with abdominal pains. Doctors diagnosed an infection and gave her antibiotics.

When the problem persisted she returned the next day but says she was sent away again. By the early hours of Christmas morning she was so ill that she returned once more and this time was admitted.

About six hours later she and her husband Kieran, 27, went to her parents' home in Bentley, Doncaster. Soon after arriving, the birth started, with her mother, Sue, 42, and father helping until an ambulance crew arrived.

Callum, weighing just 1lb 6ozs, was taken to the Infirmary, but died shortly afterwards in his father's arms. His mother was still being treated by a midwife at her parents' house and discovered her son had died when she arrived at the hospital. She said: "I walked in to find Kieran holding Callum. I'm just so angry."

Kevin Hughes, the Labour MP for Doncaster North, who lives close to the Welches said he was writing to Frank Dobson, the Health Secretary.



Gemma White and her husband, Kieran. Their baby lived for only three hours on Christmas Day

Girl climbs into drain to save missing dog

By PAUL WILKINSON

A GIRL of 11 has rescued her missing dog by climbing into a water-filled storm drain. Jennifer Dobson's four-year-old border terrier, Sandy, disappeared from her home in Newcastle upon Tyne three weeks ago. She and her brother Christopher, 15, had scoured the streets looking for it. Christopher walked for so long he lost a stone in weight. But with temperatures below zero the chances of finding it safe seemed slim until, last weekend, a neighbour heard a faint whimpering coming from a storm drain. When he lifted the manhole cover, he saw Sandy 12ft below, and went to tell his owner. Miss Dobson had no hesitation in climbing into the culvert to rescue her pet.

Yesterday she said: "Having Sandy back is the best



Jennifer Dobson: reunited with Sandy

Christmas present I could have wished for. Nothing would have stopped me getting into the drain to save him. Sandy recognised me straight away. He was really weak but he still managed to jump up and lick my face because he was so pleased to see me.

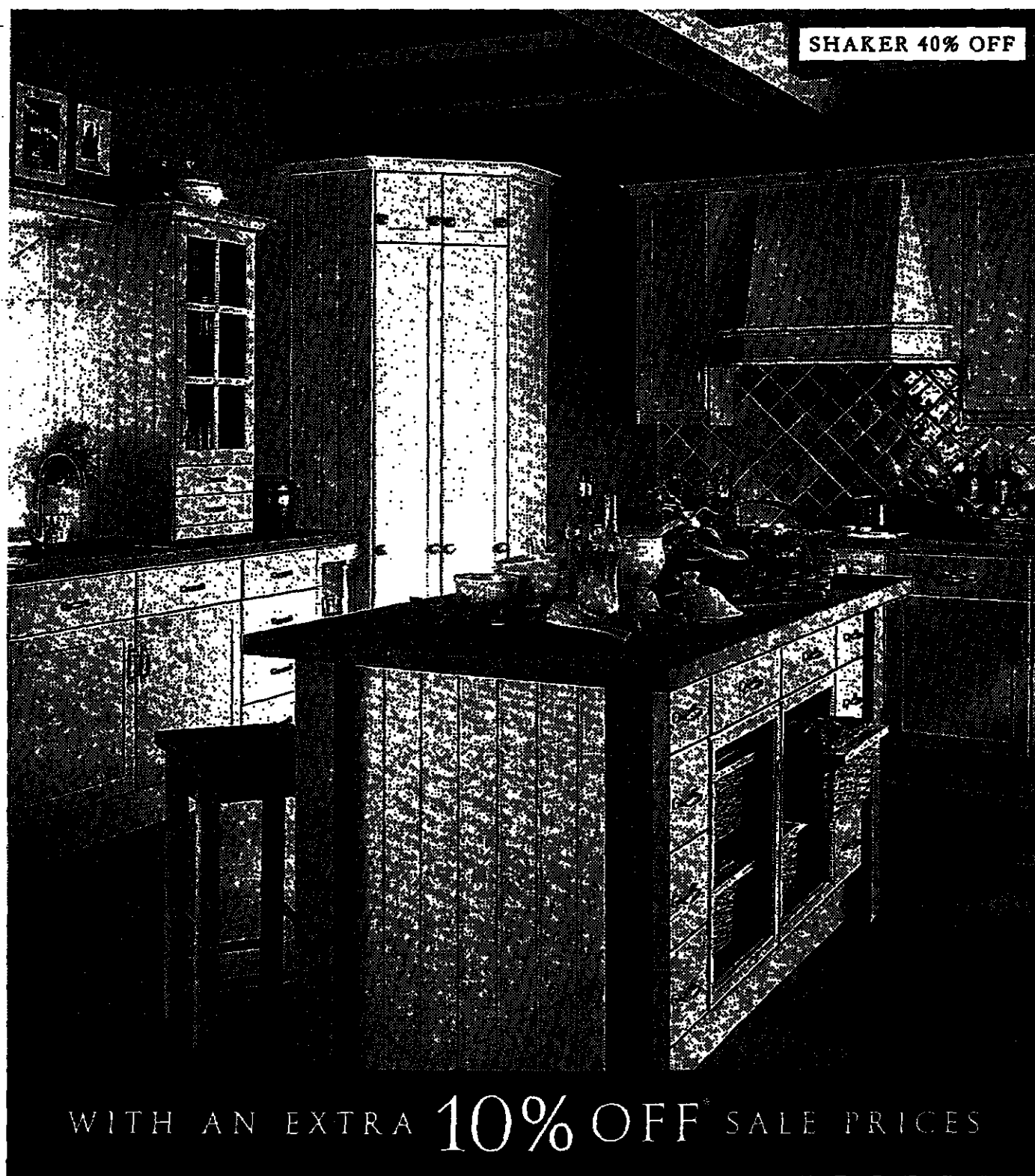
"It could have been dangerous climbing down the

ladder into the drain but I just knew I had to get Sandy. It was such a wonderful feeling to find him alive after so long that I felt my heart would burst."

Her mother, Lynn, said: "Sandy has been checked by the vet who is amazed he survived so long. We don't know how Sandy got down the drain but it appears he has survived on drinking rain water. Most dogs would have died in the freezing conditions but Sandy must have an incredible will to live. He's now fighting his way back to health and has enjoyed a good night's sleep, snuggled up in bed with Jennifer."

"He is still weak and we have had to carry him upstairs because he is too tired to walk. But he is starting to play with his ball and the love we are giving him is helping with his full recovery."

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Former pupils condemn 'bitchy' all-girl schools

A DECLINE in demand for single-sex schools was forecast yesterday after a survey of past pupils showed few would choose them for their own children.

Just a third of students educated at boys-only or girls-only schools said they wanted the same education for their child. In contrast, almost all those questioned who went to mixed schools wanted the same experience for their offspring.

The findings by the Centre for Education and Employment Research, based at Brunel University, follow its analysis of examination results which claimed that single-sex schools did little to enhance pupils' results, despite their dominance of league tables.

Professor Alan Smithers, director of the centre, said the survey showed single-sex schools were

The authors of a survey of 19-year-olds disenchanted with their education predict a decline in single-sex schools, David Charter reports

outdated, rather than in terminal decline. "Separation did not occur for educational reasons. It occurred for social reasons which have long since passed," said Professor Smithers.

"In state education, the belief was that boys were being educated for work and girls for the home," he said. "In the independent sector, boys were sent away to be educated while girls were taught at home by governesses. When girls' education was established it imitated the pattern for boys."

The introduction of comprehensive

schools in the 1960s saw most schools go co-educational, leaving behind highly selective single-sex grammar schools. This explained their dominance of examination tables, he said.

Professor Smithers added: "Increasingly it is being regarded as more natural and normal for the sexes to be educated together in secondary education."

His team interviewed 100 students in their first year at universities about their school experiences. Many girls from single-sex schools complained about the competitive-

ness and "spitefulness" of an all-girl atmosphere, although some valued being pushed academically.

Typical comments included: "All these girls together were so competitive. The smallest little spelling test and there was mass hysteria over what marks you got."

One girl said: "It was a bit bitchy because it was all girls, but without boys there was less of a distraction."

Another commented: "Not seeing boys in a working environment, you only ever saw them as a possible romantic thing. You were never looking for them as a friend."

Some girls from mixed schools said boys tended to dominate lessons, while another said: "The boys didn't dominate the lessons, rather the girls... the boys didn't get a look in." Boys who went to

PARENTS OF TRUANTS GIVEN PAGERS

Parents of regular truants are being issued with pagers so they can be alerted immediately if their children miss a lesson. The scheme in County Durham will be studied by government advisers and may be extended nationally if it improves attendance. It is one of 119 local authority programmes given backing from a £22 million government fund announced

yesterday. Stephen Byers, the Schools Standards Minister, said the projects would help ministers to find new approaches in tackling disaffection among teenagers. In Walsall, near Birmingham, pupils are to be given school passes to monitor attendance. In Devon, council officials plan to appoint "return to school" tutors to work with truants.

single-sex schools tended to believe they had lost little socially, because there were girls' schools near by. But those who had been to co-educational schools often said it enabled them to grow up at ease

with the opposite sex. Of the girls educated in single-sex schools, 38 per cent wanted the same for their children, 20 per cent wanted co-educational schools, 18 per cent wanted mixed sixth form education and 24

per cent had no preference. Among boys, nearly 30 per cent wanted single-sex schooling for their child, 30 per cent wanted mixed and 11 per cent co-educational after 16, while nearly 30 per cent were undecided.

Margaret Rudland, past president of the Girls' Schools Association, said: "There does not seem to be a decline at the moment in parental interest in single-sex schools. You could also argue that the decline in the maintained sector was not driven by market forces but was a policy decision."

She added: "Maybe when these young people become parents other factors will come into play. The views of 19-year-olds are not the same as 39-year-olds when they have their own children's future to think about."

Murals in the cathedral cast new light on early worship

An astonishing array of painting and sculpture has been uncovered by scholars, reports Dalya Alberge

SPECTACULAR medieval wall paintings and sculptures, some of which have lain hidden for centuries, have been discovered at Worcester Cathedral.

Paintings dating from 1090 — among the oldest images in the country — to 1500 have emerged. Although the majority are relatively small or faint fragments, they cast dramatic light on the cathedral and worship in the Middle Ages in that they suggest much of the interior was painted in vivid colours.

The discoveries were made by a team from the Courtauld Institute headed by David Park, a leading scholar of wall painting. He was struck by the extraordinary amount of painting that survives in what seems to be "a relatively paint-free building". The masonry appears to be untouched, bare stone, but conservators discovered paintings everywhere — from down in the depths of the crypt to around the highest capitals.

Depictions of roses, foliage, details of faces and drapery have been found throughout. "In fact, so much has survived you can get a good idea of how it looked through the Middle Ages," Mr Park said.

In the chapter house they



The Chapter House at Worcester Cathedral

found evidence showing that each of a series of niches once featured busts of angels holding books: he explained that Worcester was once part of a monastery and monks would have sat in those niches.

Perhaps the most exciting image is a 1220s head of an angel whose quality, he said, was unsurpassed by any English painting of the 13th century. Scholars and the clergy are also particularly impressed by evidence proving that the marble effigy on King John's tomb from 1216 was originally painted red. Equally significant, remnants of a figure have been identified from a faint

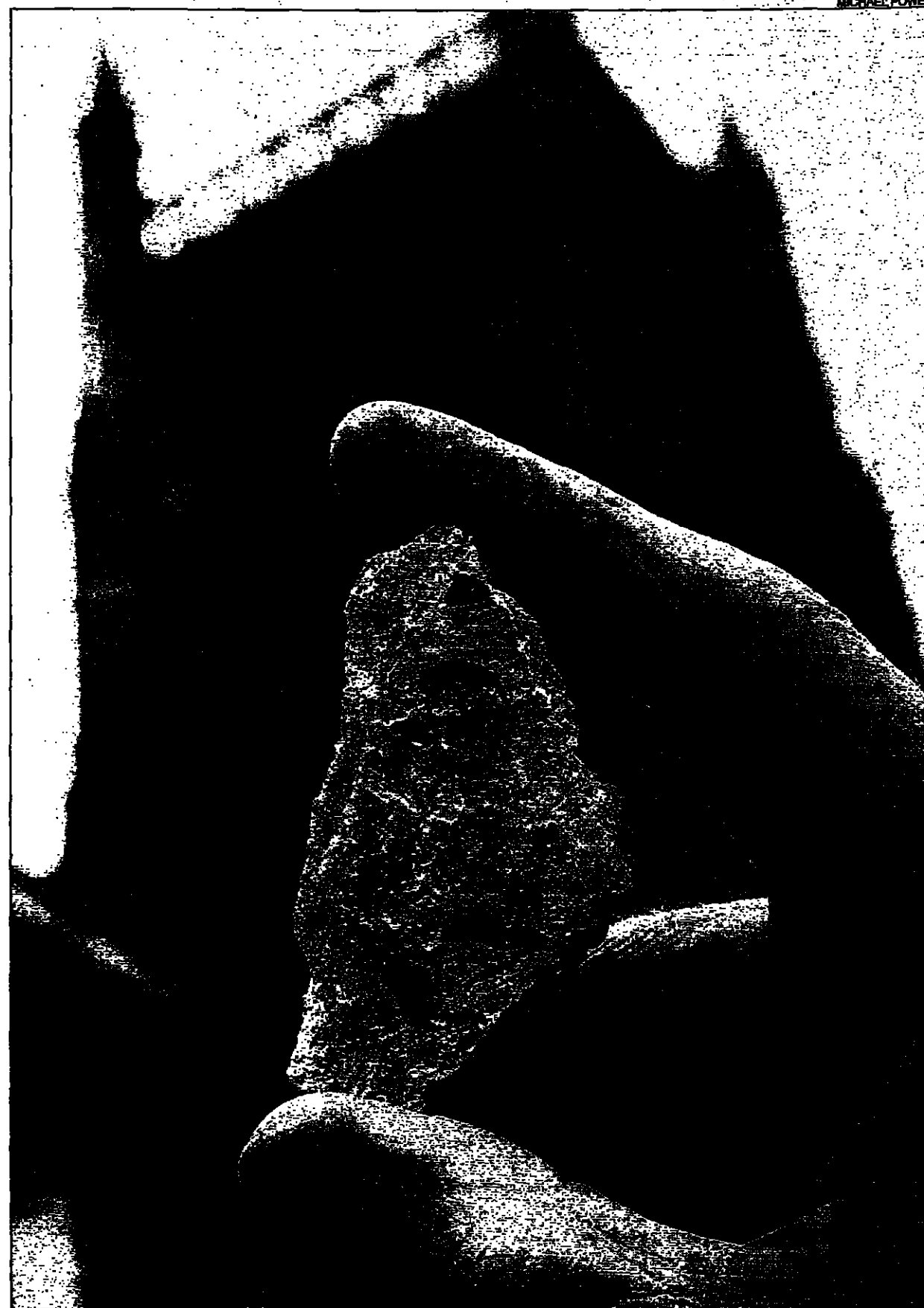
inscription as St Thomas à Becket: it dates from the 1220s, just 50 years after he was martyred, making it one of the earliest depictions of the saint.

In the Lady Chapel, they found images of shields that date from 1230 — the earliest display of decorative heraldry in a major building. Until now examples in Westminster Abbey from 1250 were thought to be the earliest.

Mr Park, whose team was called in by Worcester's Dean and Chapter and had their work funded by the Friends of the Cathedral, was surprised to have found so much. An account from 1796 recorded how "no example of ancient art... has survived the wreck of the Reformation". More recently, the Cathedral assumed it had about 14 paintings or groups of paintings, according to a list compiled in 1833 by C. E. Keyser, a great catalogue of medieval works. But Mr Park's team has brought the total to 37, even though much of the cathedral's interior was damaged by Victorian restorers.

The project "resulted in the rediscovery of a major collection of polychrome and other medieval sculptures. These and other fragments of medieval stonework, which may even include a section of St Wulfstan's shrine, are of extraordinary significance," Mr Park's report to the Dean and Chapter says. Worcester cathedral was originated by St Wulfstan in 1084.

Many of the finds date from the early 13th century: some were almost missed as they had been placed so high up in the triforium in the nave and the choir: close study showed that sculptures of bishops and angels — a precursor of Lincoln Cathedral's famous angel choir — had once been painted. Among beautifully carved images of kings, queens and angels, they found a large black ring on the pagan-style shield of a king: "A frog in the Middle Ages signified evil,"



A fragment of early 13th-century decoration from the cathedral. The amount of painting has surprised experts

Mr Park said. "That makes him evil. That means the cycle has to be reinterpreted. They are not all goodies up there. He may be an anti-Christ or Satan. His legs are also crossed, another sign of evil. So the whole scheme is more interesting."

Mr Park expressed amazement at a "great find" of 14th-century sculptures piled up in a cluttered storeroom above the giftshop. It could be reached only by a ladder from

the cloisters. Among them are 14th-century figures of a couple leaning over a parapet watching passers-by.

Scholars are particularly excited by fragments on the 1216 tomb of St John, whose will of that year expressed his wish to be buried between the shrines of St Oswald and St Wulfstan — which were both destroyed during the Dissolution of the monasteries. Mr Park said that there had been a vigorous debate in the 19th century over

whether the marble effigy was painted red originally, ruling against that theory, the Victorians had gilded the entire piece. The gilding was removed in the 1930s, but fragments discovered by the Courtauld team prove that the effigy was bright red.

Although many of the finds emerged during a two-year survey that has just been completed, much of the material had been discovered in the mid-1980s by the cathedral

archaeologists but not fully studied until now. Their work is the most thorough survey of its kind undertaken by an English cathedral.

The Dean of Worcester, the Very Rev Peter Marshall, said: "We are only just beginning to get our minds around all the information, and it humbles and warms our hearts as we come to re-recognising the rich inspiration of those people who, in this way, expressed the vision of their faith."

NEWS IN BRIEF

Date is set for au pair's appeal

Louise Woodward, the 19-year-old au pair from Elton, Cheshire, has been given a date for appeals against her conviction for the manslaughter of eight-month-old Matthew Eappen. She could know in a little over two months if she faces a minimum 15-year sentence or whether she will be free to return home.

The Massachusetts Supreme Judicial Court is to hear appeals on March 6 from Miss Woodward and the prosecution. Opening arguments will be lodged by January 20. Briefs arguing against the appeals will be filed by February 17, with replies lodged ten days later.

Victim ignored

Burglars are thought to have ignored a man lying in a diabetic coma while they ransacked his flat. James Maher, 52, of Sunderland, was discovered after neighbours contacted police about the break-in. He was taken to hospital where he died the next day.

Airliner alert

An airliner carrying 173 passengers made an emergency landing at Birmingham International Airport after the pilot discovered problems with a landing flap. The 157 Britannia Airways plane, en route from Faro, Portugal, to Manchester, landed safely.

Cell death

Police have launched an inquiry into the death of a man who collapsed in custody. Robert Hughes, 24, of Carlisle, was found in his cell two hours after he arrived at Lancaster police station on Boxing Day to help with inquiries into a breach of the peace.

Monet all-day

The Royal Academy of Arts in London plans to open 24 hours a day for a Monet exhibition in 1999. The move follows the success of late-night opening for its *Sensation* exhibition, which attracted 300,000 visitors up to its closure on Sunday.

Vanished

Police are hunting thieves who stole a garden shed from a house in Dorset. The complete 6ft x 4ft structure was taken, along with its contents including fishing tackle and a bicycle. The shed was the back garden of Russell Langley's house in the hamlet of Woodyates.

Age no barrier

A woman of 96 is one of Britain's oldest first-time authors. Margie Jenkins, of Esher, Surrey, has had *Fun at Bedtime for Little People*, stories and poems for children, written as a reaction against violent entertainment, published by the Book Guild.

Festive double

Cherry Miller, 36, of Downend, Bristol, has given birth to two sons on Christmas Day — six years apart. Mrs Miller's latest son, as yet unnamed, is a brother for Jacob. She and her husband Paul, 38, also have a daughter, Corinne, 3.

CORRECTION

A report ("High-flying union official grounded after hitting rival", April 9) concerning a British Airways union official, Michael Coleman, incorrectly stated that he earned more than £120,000 a year. His earnings are approximately £42,000. The article also wrongly said that Mr Coleman spat at and punched a rival union official. We apologise for these errors.

Date set for issue of Diana stamps

THE long-awaited stamps to commemorate the life of the late Diana, Princess of Wales, will be on sale from February 3. Apart from the Royal Wedding stamps of July 1981, commemorating the wedding of the Prince and Princess of Wales, they will be the only set issued in Britain with the Princess's image on them.

The 120-million print run will double the previous record set for royal commemorative stamps: 60 million were released after the wedding. The special issue is expected to raise several

million pounds for the Diana, Princess of Wales Memorial Fund which will receive all profits.

Design and production of the five stamps started in the week of the Princess's death but the Post Office said then that the release had been delayed at the wish of the Spencer family.

The 26p first-class stamps show photographs of the Princess by Lord Snowdon, Tim Graham, John Stillwell and Terence Donovan (John Snowdon took two of the pictures). They feature

formal and informal poses and each stamp has a purple border as a mark of respect.

The Queen's head and the value are also shown in purple, and the stamps are subtitled with the dates 1961-1997. John Roberts, chief executive of the Post Office, said: "We hope that there will be a considerable demand for the stamps so that the memorial fund can benefit by millions of pounds." Buckingham Palace made it clear that the timing of the release was a matter between the Royal Mail and the

Princess's family. A Kensington Palace spokesman said that the family were "delighted" with the design of the stamps and welcomed the issue.

Peter Jennings, a leading stamp collector who has campaigned for the stamps' early release, said he was delighted that the "magnificent" stamps would soon be on sale. Mr Jennings, a fellow of the Royal Philatelic Society, said: "These stamps will be a lasting tribute. They will be collected by philatelists and non-stamp collectors for years to come." (PA News)

Cancer victim hails 'miracle'

By PAUL WILKINSON

PAT ENGLISH yesterday credited the grandchild she never expected to see after apparently beating a cancer which doctors said could kill her within three months.

Mrs English, a Roman Catholic, believes her recovery is a miracle, worked after two visits to the religious shrine at Lourdes in southern France. Doctors told her last July that her condition was inoperable and that she was unlikely to be alive this Christmas.

But, after her second trip to Lourdes last October, her consultant told her that he could find no trace of the liver cancer which had threatened her life. Yesterday Mrs English, 52, a canteen worker from Washington, Tyne and Wear, said: "I believe in miracles and that God has granted me the miracle of seeing my first grandchild born."

Rebecca was born on

November 29, six weeks prematurely, but was allowed home only on Christmas Eve. Mrs English said: "If I was to die next year at least I have had the joy of holding her, which is what I have prayed for."

An Imperial Cancer Research Fund spokesman said: "Spontaneous remissions in cancer do happen, but only very rarely. A patient's beliefs can be a source of strength or comfort in coping with a terminal cancer or helping to combat cancer that is treatable. Some cancers of course are more susceptible to chemotherapy than others which are more aggressive."

Professor Reg Hall, lead physician with the Northern Cancer Network based in Newcastle, said: "It's an absolutely lovely story, especially for the family who believe it is a miracle. We know in scientific terms that the progress of a cancer is very variable."



The set of stamps showing photographs by Lord Snowdon, Tim Graham, John Stillwell and Terence Donovan goes on sale on February 3

Globetrotting family reaches record books

FOR the past seven years a tiny horse-drawn caravan has been home to a Scottish family while they made a record-breaking round-the-world journey.

Three children and their parents have crossed three continents to become the first people to make a continuous circumnavigation of the world in a horse-drawn vehicle.

The Grant family and a succession of horses endured illness, political upheaval and war on their 12,360-mile overland trip. But now, back in Scotland, they face a struggle against poverty. A court case in Mongolia and expulsion from China both hit their finances and they only managed to complete the trip thanks to some kindly benefactors.

David and Kate Grant and their children Torcuil, 17, Eilidh, 16, and Fionn, 13, are being put up at a Scottish hotel by a sponsor until the middle of January but then they may have to return to their caravan because they say they are unable to claim benefits.

Their adventure began in August 1990 when the family sold their house in Orkney for £40,000 and decided to satisfy their wanderlust. At Letham Grange Hotel near Arbroath yesterday Mrs Grant said that they had thought up the trip after becoming bored with a humdrum life. "We both like travel and thought where can we go with a young family."

Inspiration came when they saw an advertisement for horse-drawn holidays. Mr Grant, who gave up his job as a wildlife management ecologist, said they had hoped the journey would "give the children a slightly different education from that supplied by the national curriculum".

Their caravan was built by a local funeral director to a design sketched on the back of an envelope by Mr Grant and at low points Mrs Grant says she felt it was "a bit like a coffin". She missed 18 months

Couple bored by humdrum lifestyle took children on the road for world trip

of the trip when she returned home twice because of illness and family problems.

The family said the saddest moment of the journey came when Traceur, the horse that pulled their caravan for over 10,000 miles, died. Their first horse had proved too light. Traceur pulled the caravan from France across Europe and Asia and in America to the Missouri where he died of a brain tumour.

In Mongolia three drunken men had tried to steal the horse. To frighten them, Mr Grant fired a few catapult shots over their heads. Later one of the men claimed he had been hit in the eye leading to a protracted court case. When charges were finally dropped Mr Grant was still forced to pay £750 for the complainant's medical expenses.

Earlier in the trip, the family had to flee from Slovenia when war broke out in the former Yugoslavia in 1991. A tractor was commandeered to pull them to safety in Austria as snipers' bullets flew.

Their money troubles continued in China where £6,000 of their budget was eaten up when they were ordered to leave the country. Mr Grant said the authorities were unable to explain why they had to go. "All roads were closed to foreigners. It was two weeks before the UN women's conference. I just thought security had flipped."

Their money problems were later partly alleviated when Mr Peter Liu, who owns

Letham Grange Hotel, read about their plight in a newspaper and offered to become a sponsor. He joined their main sponsor, Grant's of Dalry, and eventually the family were able to secure passage from Japan to America.

The young Grants have journeyed through three continents and 15 countries but the only schooling they received was during two terms in a Slovenian school. They have also studied through distance learning.

Fionn now wants to live anywhere that plays basketball while Eilidh has discovered a talent for horse riding and plans to train as a jockey in Berkshire. Torcuil said: "It has been a great experience. I haven't actually done any O levels, but I will probably do them at some point."

Mr Grant, who boosted the family's income by writing occasional articles, is working on a book about their trip.



The Grant family with the horse-drawn caravan that took them round the world; now it may become home again

Handler will leave best friend behind

By DANIEL McGRORY

A POLICE dog handler who is helping to search for the remains of a Royal Marine believed to have been murdered on the Falkland Islands will have to leave his dog behind after the venture.

Sergeant Mick Swindells and his border collie Lee, who are based in Blackpool, will lead the hunt next month for Alan Addis, who disappeared 17 years ago. Quarantine regulations will force Sergeant Swindells to leave the dog, which can detect graves and provide crucial evidence.

"It will be a tremendous wrench to part with Lee after five years of working with him but he could be the key to this mystery," Sergeant Swindells said. "He would be in quarantine for six months so it would be kinder to let him stay and work with the Falklands police."

Local detectives believe the 19-year-old commando was killed on the orders of a prominent islander who accused him of having an affair with his wife.

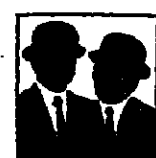
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Explorers to seek Atlantis in Bolivia

By NICK NUTTALL, TECHNOLOGY CORRESPONDENT

A MAP expert's theory that the remains of the lost city of Atlantis are in Bolivia is to be put to the test by an international expedition led by the British explorer, Colonel John Blashford-Snell.

Jim Allen of Torquay, an amateur archaeologist who trained as a photographic interpreter with the RAF, has spent more than 14 years trying to pinpoint the fabled city's location. He is convinced that it was built on and around Lake Poopo in the shadow of the Andes.

Mr Allen's research, based on a detailed study of satellite and aerial images where he has tried to match the Greek philosopher Plato's ancient description of the city with

natural features on the globe, won favour with Colonel Blashford-Snell after being aired in *The Times* in February.

In March the explorer and 20 colleagues from Britain, America and Bolivian archaeological centres are to sail from Lake Titicaca down the Desaguadero River to Lake Poopo.

Here they plan to investigate an ancient canal-like feature which Mr Allen claims is man-made and gave the Atlantians access to the sea from where they crossed to North Africa and the Mediterranean to trade.

The journey will be made in traditional dragon-headed reed boats which are under construction at Lake Titicaca. The expedition, which will also study settlements of the Tiwanaka Indians en route, expects to arrive at Lake Poopo in April.

Mr Allen said many classical scholars were convinced that Atlantis was a myth or, if it did exist, was in the Mediterranean near Gibraltar.

But he said there was compelling evidence from local place-names, a more sympathetic study of the Plato text, and satellite imagery that it was on the other side of the Atlantic Ocean in Antisoya, the ancient name of modern-day Bolivia.



Col Blashford-Snell: expedition leader

Birds take flight as orchards vanish

Intensive farming, fuelled by EU grants, is driving out some of the countryside's most familiar species, reports Nick Nuttall

THE destruction of old and traditional orchards is contributing to a decline in birdlife, scientists have found.

Surveys comparing modern, intensively managed orchards with old ones have found that numbers of birds and the variety of species are far greater where there are traditionally managed trees.

Dr Joe Crocker, one of the study scientists, said: "Old orchards foster a more abundant and diverse wildlife. The number of birds doubled in orchards where trees were more than 25 years old, he said. The findings indicate that the trend towards grubbing up old orchards in favour of new ones or other crops, fuelled by European agricultural grants, is contributing to the decline of some bird populations.

Dr Crocker, whose main work is on the effects of pesticides on the countryside, said urgent research was needed to see if the difference between old and new orchards was because of habitat or levels of pesticides.

"People see them [orchards] as pretty places and generally benign. But modern orchards are a high-tech business," said Dr Crocker, who is based at the Government's Central Science Laboratory in York.

Trees are planted in rows, are heavily pruned and are likely to receive frequent sprays during the season of fungicides, insecticides and herbicides. "Your average Cox's Orange Pippin will get 17 sprays before the apple

leaves the orchard," he said. In contrast, an old traditional orchard may receive just one or two sprays and few if any fungicides. News of the research comes as horticulturalists are preparing to offer growers nearly 150 lost varieties of apples, known from the medieval and early Christian period, which have been rediscovered in parks and gardens in Ireland.

The varieties, with names like Bloody Butcher, Red Brandy and Apple Jack — mentioned by Falstaff in Shakespeare's *Henry IV Part II*, are being grown from seed at University College, Dublin. It is believed that the genes in the old varieties could boost modern ones and help cut back on the need for pesticides. Many of the older varieties are naturally resistant to modern-day pests such as scab, mildew and canker.

The varieties in old orchards may be less productive but more robust at dealing with pest attacks, and farmers often manage them alongside livestock which grazes underneath the trees.

Their dung increased the availability of insect food for birds as did the reduced use of herbicides, which increased the range and numbers of flowers. The age of the trees meant there were likely to be more holes for nesting birds and the older more gnarled barks probably housed more insect and sap food.

Dr Crocker, a member of the British Ecological Society, and his team surveyed 109



"There should be a value on landscape and wildlife, rather than just on maximum production," says James Marsden, who owns an old orchard.

orchards in Hereford and Worcester. They carried out ten-minute surveys of hedges and trees, counting the number and species of birds and flowers. Not only were there twice as many birds in the older orchards but there were more species.

Both old and new orchards held common birds such as blue tits and chaffinches. But the older ones also held less

common birds, such as woodpeckers and little owls.

James Marsden of English Nature, who owns an old orchard in Much Marcle, Hereford and Worcester, said the findings confirmed his own surveys of his two-acre plot and of his neighbour's more substantial orchard.

"The modern bush orchard is a desert in comparison," he said. He and his neighbour

had scores of species including green, lesser spotted and greater spotted woodpeckers, tree creepers, roosting buzzards and goshawks.

"Our yields are nowhere near as heavy as in a modern bush orchard. But you have to look at this in the round. There should be a value on landscape and wildlife rather than just on maximum production," he said.

RSPB WANTS FRIENDLY FRUIT LABELLED

AN "eco" label for fruit is being promoted by the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) to generate support for old varieties of fruit and traditionally managed orchards (writes Nick Nuttall).

Jim Dixon, senior policy officer specialising in agriculture at the RSPB, said that in Germany apples produced in old orchards now carried such labels. "They say, by buying this apple consumers are saving these birds, animals and plants," he said.

But Mr Dixon said reforms were needed in the way farmers were subsidised and funded for environmental-friendly agricultural schemes, under national programmes and those initiated under the European Common Agricultural Policy.

He said the Forest Stewardship scheme, promoted by



the Ministry of Agriculture to encourage farmers to manage forests, including orchards, for wildlife, was excellent but lacked finance. Its budget of £24 million could be spent "many times over". Meanwhile, the Government spent £3 billion on the common agricultural policy which subsidised farmers to maximise production of crops through intensive, environmentally damaging, agriculture.

Biologist stumbles on colony of alien crabs

BIOLOGISTS at the University of Wales have discovered a huge colony of South American dwarf crabs at Cardiff Docks.

Dr Chris Mettam spotted the crabs by chance while looking at worms in the area with a colleague.

It is thought the *rhithropanopeus harrisi* may have arrived in Wales via the Netherlands, where boats from across the Atlantic have started a thriving population of the crabs, which have white claws and are the size of a fingernail.

The two biologists also discovered another "alien invader", a mussel which they think comes from West Africa. "We think these alien species come in as larvae in the ballast water of ships," said Dr Mettam.

"We are not sure how long the crabs have been here but, from scraping samples we have taken, the colony now numbers possibly hundreds of thousands. I was showing my colleague, Dr Jorg Hardige, some worms in the area when we discovered them."

"It is a great bonus to find them because Dr Hardige is working on research into pheromones, and how animals use them to send messages, and this species has been used to that end in the past."

The crab species is currently confined to the Roath basin and sheltered areas in the docks but Dr Mettam, 54, believes the building of the Cardiff Bay Barrage could encourage them to spread. "There will be more river water behind the barrage and it will be less salty, which they like," he said.

"We also don't know for sure what effect on the local crab population it would have if the colony got out of the docks and spread, so we are keeping an eye on it. Further research needs to be done on that, but it is not thought that they would cause a great deal of harm."



Much Marcle's birds: from left, the little owl, green woodpecker, lesser spotted woodpecker, greater spotted woodpecker, tree creeper and goshawk

Battleship gunner turned traitor for love and money

Michael Evans on the sailor who betrayed the fleet to Kaiser's Germany

A SAILOR who was seduced into spying by the wife of a German agent earned a fortune for the secrets he betrayed, according to newly released MIS files covering the pre-First World War period.

George Parrott, the only Englishman to be put on trial for spying for the Germans before war began, was chief gunner of the battleship *HMS Agamemnon*. He became one of the highest-paid agents recruited by the German secret intelligence service during the lead-up to war.

The MIS files, released by the Public Record Office, belie the widespread belief that the Germans were poor payers. Warrant Officer Parrott was paid £500 in 1910 for a naval manoeuvres report for 1909 — the equivalent of more than £23,000 today.

Soon after he was recruited in 1910, Parrott handed over four volumes of a Navy report on gunnery in 1908 and 1909, for which he was paid £40 — about £1,800 today.

The MIS files underline the professionalism of the Germans, and the way in which

the British counter-espionage agency, founded in 1909, tackled the threat with limited resources. The decision to allow MIS to intercept mail led to the uncovering of many spies.

Parrott was recruited by Patricia Riley, who lived in Sheerness and married Karl Hentschel, an ex-merchant seaman employed by the German secret service. Hentschel moved to Chatham after marrying and set up a language school, posing as a Dutchman. Patricia Hentschel was

so successful that by the summer of 1910 Parrott was providing details of exercises off Portland, battle practice at sea and other naval manoeuvres involving *Agamemnon*.

MIS discovered that at one point Parrott smuggled Karl Hentschel on board *Agamemnon* and showed him the guns. Later, Patricia Hentschel persuaded him to remove Navy gunnery instruction manuals and the handbook of a six-inch gun.

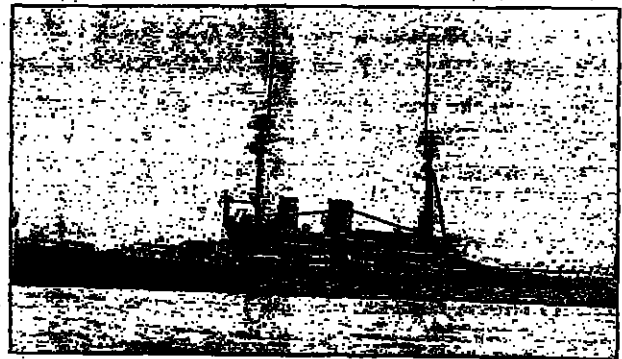
But when the Germans asked him to provide a com-

plete list of classified manuals and documents on navy ships, Parrott at first refused "but after being threatened with exposure, he agreed on condition nothing was put in writing", the MIS files reveal.

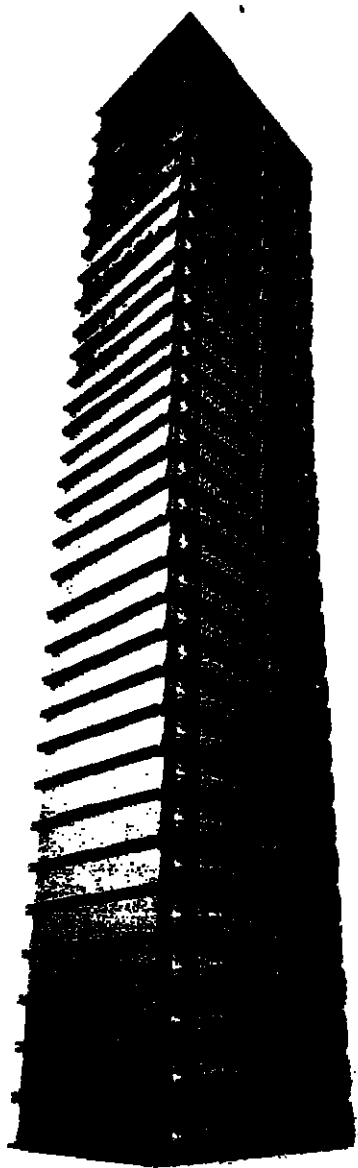
In March 1911 Parrott and Hentschel quarrelled over money and the German's jealousy over his spy's relationship with his wife. Parrott also came under suspicion after his mail was intercepted in 1911 and, although there was insufficient evidence to charge him, he was sacked from the Navy in 1912.

Parrott was sentenced to four years in prison after being arrested subsequently with an incriminating letter from the Germans. His wife received a pension from the German secret service.

German agents recruited in occupied territory to spy on Britain were taught in Antwerp by a "fair woman" known as Baronne Jeanne Fraulein Doktor and Madame Slagmulder. An MIS file of 1917 said she trained agents to learn questions by heart because of fear of police raids.



Parrott was the chief gunner on HMS Agamemnon



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Botha's defiance of law pushes South Africa towards new era of strife



Botha: refuses to obey call from the truth commission

Nelson Mandela's decision to bow out as president of the African National Congress and soon as South Africa's President clearly heralds the end of an era of reconciliation in which he has played the leading role.

As South Africa enters the new year, it is bracing itself for the possibility of an awful symmetry — that the curtain may be brought down on that era of reconciliation by the jailing of another former President, P. W. Botha, who ruled from 1978 to 1989.

Mr Botha, 81, carried through such notable reforms as abolition of the pass laws but is universally remembered as the unyielding boss of apartheid South Africa, die

Mandela's former nemesis could end up in jail for failing to make amends for his role in apartheid, R. W. Johnson writes

Groot Krookodil (the Great Crocodile) of a thousand cartoons. He has contemptuously refused to appear before the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, claiming he has nothing to apologise for. The commission has responded by subpoenaing Mr Botha to appear before it — a summons he has ignored. His lawyer has made lengthy written representations of Mr Botha's answers to questions posed by the

commission, claiming that this should be enough.

Frank Kahn, Attorney-General of the Western Cape, has let it be known he will allow things to rest until January 2. But if Mr Botha maintains his position he could be sentenced to up to two years' jail.

Mr Botha has entertained both Mr Mandela and Archbishop Desmond Tutu, the commission chairman, to tea at his home at

Wilderness, on the Cape coast, and greeted them with great warmth. For Mr Botha, that was evidence enough of his goodwill, but Mr Mandela and Archbishop Tutu have appealed to him to appear before the commission, and profess themselves disappointed that he has chosen to disobey the law.

Opinion is divided. For many blacks, Mr Botha is the symbol of all they most hate and they feel that given the many atrocities shown by the commission to have taken place under his rule, he is being let off too lightly as it is. He makes no plea of ignorance, but merely says he did what he had to do to oppose communist-backed terrorism. For many Afrikaners, however, Mr

Botha has become a symbolic figure of pride and resistance.

They agree with him that all the commission wants to do is to humiliate him publicly, an act they see as an insult to the dignity of Afrikaners in general. They also point bitterly to the undoubted bias the commission has shown towards the ANC — giving amnesty, for example, to 37 of its leaders without them even fulfilling the legal requirements for personal appearances and full disclosure before the commission.

A new element has entered the drama with the detention by President Chiluba of his predecessor as President of Zambia, Kenneth

Kaunda, who is 73. South Africa is one of many countries to have protested vehemently against this treatment of an aged former head of state. Comparison with Mr Botha is inevitable. Dr Kaunda once jailed Mr Chiluba. Just as Mr Botha kept Mr Mandela in jail.

What makes the jailing of Mr Botha particularly problematic is the possibility that he, like Dr Kaunda, might well go on hunger strike. For the Government to back down now would involve an unacceptable loss of face and a bitter blow to black pride, but if Mr Botha were to die in jail many Afrikaners would never forgive the ANC, and the era of reconciliation would end in bitter strife.

Violence, fraud and floods mar Kenyan elections

FROM DAVID ORR IN NAIROBI

ACCUSATIONS of vote-rigging, misdirection of ballot papers and floods have plagued elections in Kenya, prompting the authorities to extend polling by 24 hours in affected areas. At least three people, including a baby, were killed during election violence.

Temper became frayed at a number of polling stations yesterday as voters confronted election officials over delays in the process. Ballot papers were delivered late, to wrong locations and, in some cases, not at all.

Charity Ngilu, the only female challenger to President Moi, accused his Kenya African National Union (KANU) of vote-rigging and said she would challenge the result if he won. This charismatic middle-aged businessman will have a fight on her hands; the President, who has already been in office 19 years, is widely expected to be re-

elected. Mrs Ngilu and her supporters stormed electoral offices in central Kitui district yesterday, took about 1,000 voter cards and drove off, pursued by police. She alleged that the cards, which electors must show before voting, had been bought by KANU to boost its tally.

Sheikh Khalid Balala, a radical Islamic preacher and opposition politician, was arrested in the coastal city of Mombasa shortly before voting started. Sheikh Balala, who returned to Kenya this year from exile in Germany, had pledged to disrupt the polls, saying they had been rigged by President Moi and KANU.

There were reports of violence leading to three deaths, including that of a four-month-old baby, in a western district. Flooding in northeastern areas forced the cancellation of voting and electors had



Masai villagers queue near Kajiado in the Rift Valley yesterday to vote in presidential and parliamentary elections. Many are illiterate and had to ask officials for help

to paddle boats to neighbouring polling stations. The Electoral Commission said stations hit by weather or logistical problems would remain open until this evening.

Mr Moi, 73, who voted near his rural home in central Kenya, said: "We are winning." Mwai Kibaki, his former Vice-President, who is running a distant second,

said: "There is no chance for Moi to win this election even though they (KANU) are going to attempt some rigging in some places."

Vote-buying by KANU, common during the campaign, continued yesterday. "I will not vote until my stomach has been serviced," said one man waiting for money at Kisii, in the southwest. People had to

wait two or three hours in hot sunny weather to cast their votes in some constituencies. At a primary school in a Nairobi suburb, police struggled to control crowds who shouted angrily when the wrong ballot papers were delivered.

However, in most places people waited patiently in long queues. At polling stations in

Kajiado in the central Rift Valley, hundreds of brightly dressed Masai queued against a technicolour backdrop of rolling green hills and bougainvillea. Most were illiterate and had to be helped by election agents to put their mark beside their presidential and parliamentary choices.

The Rift Valley is traditionally a KANU stronghold; the

Masai, a minority tribe, are considered allies of the President's small Kalenjin tribe. An hour and a half's drive away in Machakos, Eastern Province, however, the inhabitants, belong to the Kamba tribe and are mostly opposition supporters. The townspeople are strongly behind Mrs Ngilu, who has vowed to overthrow Mr Moi and sell his presiden-

tial jet. Mr Moi won more than a third of the vote in the last elections in 1992. To avoid a second-round run-off, he must finish in first place nationally and get a quarter of the vote in at least five of Kenya's eight provinces. The result is due on New Year's Day.

Post-colonial relics, page 14

Diver dies in Cape shark attack

FROM INIGO GILMORE IN CAPE TOWN

A GREAT white shark killed a diver, the latest in a wave of attacks in South Africa which has raised fears among surfers and tourists.

The shark, with a dorsal fin said to measure 40in, is believed to have been responsible for the death of Sunday of an experienced diver, Ian Hill, 39, from Durban. Mr Hill was spearfishing about 400 yards from the shore in about 30ft of water when the shark attacked.

Witnesses told police they saw a fin gliding through the water, followed by sudden thrashing and a pool of blood where Mr Hill had been. The victim's wife and nine-year-old daughter had been waiting on the beach for him to return and are now under sedation. Only Mr Hill's spear gun was retrieved and a helicopter search was called off last night.

The death in Pringle Bay was the first in the Cape Town area in more than a decade. It comes on the heels of a recent spate of shark attacks elsewhere in the country, and has fuelled safety concerns among the thousands of British and other overseas tourists and surfers who have flocked to the sun-soaked Western Cape over the Christmas and New Year holidays.

While surfing experts insist such incidents are isolated, they are concerned by the implications of the latest tragedy. They have given a warning that shark activity has increased because of higher sea temperatures. Sharks also had to eat substantially more, because their digestion had speeded up in warmer waters. Another death has also raised safety concerns among tourists after it was reported that a 65-year-old grandfather watched his wife, 63, trampled and kicked to death by an ostrich on a farm 25 miles outside Cape Town. The couple had taken a short cut through a field when they were attacked.

Israeli police ask for rabbis' help to crush anti-Arab plot

FROM ROSS DUNN IN JERUSALEM

HUNDREDS of Jewish extremists are preparing to initiate a bloody conflict with Arabs, Israel's senior police officer said yesterday. He called for clear action to stop them.

Inspector-General Assaf Hefetz gave his estimate of the number of extremists after the arrest of two Jewish men who allegedly plotted to desecrate an Islamic shrine in Jerusalem.

He appealed to rabbis and right-wing politicians to restrain extremists such as Avigdor Eskin and Haim Pakovitch, who are accused of a plan to throw a pig's head on to the Temple Mount during the Muslim holy month of Ramadan. "This is not just a war of the Shin Bet [Israeli intelligence agency] and the police," he said.

Mr Hefetz added that when Binyamin Netanyahu, the Is-

raeli Prime Minister, and Avigdor Kahalani, the Internal Security Minister, heard of the plot "they had an anxiety attack".

The former deputy chief of the Shin Bet, Gideon Ezra, also underlined the seriousness of the situation. "I think the ultra right-wing [political leadership] is aware of the dangers contained in some of these extremist elements and that they have to assist the security forces," he said.

"All the rabbis and all the

people associated with the extreme right wing should denounce this alleged plot by Eskin and his associates. If anyone has reason to believe that somebody intends to commit a serious act, they should inform the authorities and stop whatever is planned before it happens."

Elishu Bakshi-Doron, Israel's chief Sephardic rabbi, whose congregation comprises Jews of Oriental origin, was the first to respond to the call to condemn Jewish mil-

itants. In a letter to Yassir Arafat, the Palestinian Authority chairman, he wrote: "We were sad to hear of the criminal plot by extremists who wished to harm the faith and the faithful and inflame relations between the religions. We denounce any attempt and evil thought which could put off peace and friendship." The rabbi also gave his best wishes to Muslim clerics who were preparing to observe Ramadan.

Hassan Tahboub, Palestinian Authority Minister of Religious Affairs, said if any attacks were carried out by Jewish right-wing extremists against al-Aqsa mosque in Jerusalem's Old City, a furious reaction from the Muslim world could be expected.

Mr Eskin, the key suspect in the case, last night denied through his lawyers any involvement in the alleged plot.

Beach goddess rescued

Jerusalem: A bronze statuette of the Greek goddess Aphrodite has been discovered on a beach in northern Israel (Ross Dunn writes).

The relic was found during a survey by the Israeli Government's Antiquities Au-

thority. The remains of a complex from the late Roman period was also uncovered.

The beheaded goddess is dressed in a toga, with a medallion on her chest. The statuette is 20cm tall and said to be in excellent condition.

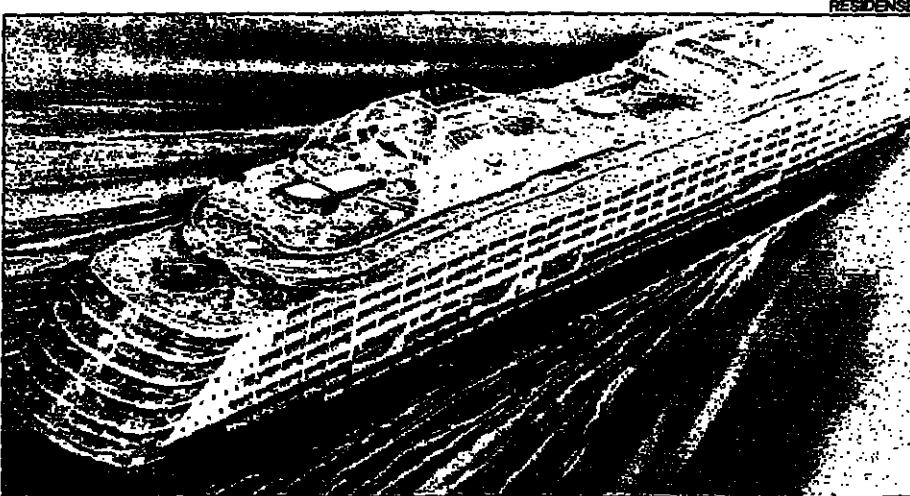
Liner gives super-rich chance to float businesses

BY MICHAEL DYNES

A BAHAMAS-BASED company and a German shipyard have agreed to build a \$500 million (£312 million) luxury liner where 21st-century international business executives can live and work as they cruise around the world.

The 85,000-tonne liner, one of the largest built, will provide 250 fully-furnished private apartments, along with 180 guest suites, for the world's super-rich and their families, friends, business associates and domestic staff. At prices ranging from \$1.17 million to \$5.83 million per apartment, excluding an annual maintenance fee of between \$61,000 and \$241,000, the new maritime residences will not come cheap. But their potential status as the world's first floating tax havens may help to offset the cost.

The 958ft vessel will also offer residents roof-top tennis courts, a golf simulator, a 1,500m jogging track, a health centre and spa, along with



An artist's impression of the liner, with apartments costing up to \$5.83 million

swimming pools, cinemas, shops and seven restaurants providing everything from haute cuisine to fast food.

The glossy company brochure, mapping out what life might be like on board, conjures up images of Texan oil men, South African vineyard owners, London investment

bankers and wealthy divorcees gauffing exotic cocktails accompanied by plates of caviar and foie gras.

ResidenSea Ltd, the consortium of Norwegian shipping and financial companies backing the scheme, insist that satellite communications and the Internet have enabled

businesses to be run from anywhere in the world. This has allowed the company to offer the first cruise liner based on "home ownership rather than rented cabins".

Christened *The World of ResidenSea*, the new luxury liner will come into operation in the middle of 2000. It will

spend about 100 days at sea each year, stopping off at a variety of prestige events including the Olympic Games in Sydney, the Cannes Film Festival, the Monaco Grand Prix and the America's Cup in Auckland.

When ResidenSea began its sales and marketing exercise in August, sceptics insisted that the project was doomed because it was "prohibitively expensive". But with 39 apartments worth more than \$80 million already sold, with another 45 under negotiation, ResidenSea is confident it will reach the \$100 million sales target required for the project to get the final go-ahead within weeks. Letters of intent have already been signed with Howaldtswerke-Deutsche Werft, the shipyard in Kiel.

One drawback is that, unlike buying estate on dry land, the new maritime properties will depreciate over time. But, the company claims, a lifestyle, not an investment, is being bought.

WORLD IN BRIEF

Seoul MPs back financial reforms

Seoul: South Korean MPs yesterday approved 13 financial reform Bills amid reports that foreign lenders had agreed to roll over some existing loans to South Korean banks.

While the developments represented a ray of light amid the financial gloom, figures released yesterday showed a sharp downturn in exports during November. One piece of approved legislation combined supervisory authority over the banking, securities and insurance industry into one agency. (Reuters)

Asian crisis, page 19

Hostility to Prince's visit

Colombo: A group of nationalist Sinhalese, led by a retired Supreme Court judge, is opposing the visit on February 4 by the Prince of Wales for the 50th anniversary of Sri Lanka's independence from Britain, but the Prince's office in London said yesterday his visit would go ahead. The group, known as the National Joint Committee, is critical of Britain for what it calls "the brutal manner in which the British forces crushed earlier attempts by the island to become independent. (AP)

British air brawler fined

Brisbane: A British tourist was fined \$400 (£400) for punching an airline attendant who intervened in a drunken mid-air fight. Bruce Geoffrey Harris, 37, a computer consultant from London, pleaded guilty in the Brisbane Magistrates' Court to assaulting a flight attendant on a British Airways plane flying from Singapore to Brisbane yesterday. The court heard that Harris had been drinking with a fellow passenger when a fight broke out. (AP)

Mrs Gandhi takes plunge

Delhi: Rajiv Gandhi's 51-year-old widow, the Italian-born Sonia Gandhi, right, announced yesterday that she would campaign in the general election in February for her late husband's Congress party (Coomi Kapoor writes). The news was hailed by Congress members as a major boost for the 106-year-old party, whose fortunes have been on the wane recently, with a number of breakaways and defections by senior leaders.



New leader for Vietnam

Le Kha Phieu, 66, an army lieutenant-general with a reputation as a conservative party man rather than a combat soldier, has been appointed Vietnamese Communist Party Secretary-General, according to party sources yesterday (James Pringle writes). General Phieu was chosen to succeed Do Muoi, 80, a party apparatchik who has held power since 1991, by the party's central committee, the sources said.

Assisi frescoes damaged

Assisi: Frescoes in the earthquake-damaged Basilica of St Francis in this central Italian town suffered a fresh mishap when they were accidentally soaked by water from a waste pipe. Art experts said they believed that the frescoes in the lower basilica, attributed to the school of Giotto and the Roman school, had escaped serious damage. (Reuters)

Pilot on terror flight had only seconds to act

By MICHAEL EVANS

THE pilot of United Airlines Flight 826, bound for Honolulu with 374 passengers and 19 crew, had just seconds to warn everyone to put on their seatbelts before the Boeing 747 flew into a vortex of unexpectedly severe clear air turbulence that forced the jumbo jet to fall 1,000ft.

Many passengers, mostly Japanese holidaymakers, were still walking around or sitting with their belts unfastened when the plane, flying at 33,000ft, dropped on Sunday night. One passenger, a Japanese woman named a

passengers bouncing against the ceiling, with oxygen masks released above the seats. One passenger said later: "The plane suddenly sank and, bang, people without seat belts were thrown out of their seats."

Passengers, with blood-stained faces and broken bones, were taken to hospital when the plane returned to Narita airport, near Tokyo. United Airlines said ten were injured seriously enough to be kept in hospital.

Seconds before the airliner entered the danger zone, it had been flying smoothly; there was no sign of storm clouds. As the plane began to shake and lose altitude, the pilot said: "We have just hit air turbulence and the aircraft descended 300 metres. There is no danger of a crash."

The plane was videoed by a passenger: it showed the aircraft shaking, and screaming

because, without water droplets in storm clouds, there is nothing for radar waves to bounce off. The only hint of trouble would have come from a pilot who had already flown through the same airspace or from general information of possible turbulent conditions detailed on the weather chart provided by the Meteorological Office in Washington.

A spokesman for the British Meteorological Office at Bracknell, in Berkshire, said the chart would have listed "slight, moderate and severe" turbulence along the flight path. "But this was obviously very severe." The turbulence was on the edge of a jetstream, a core of strong winds caused by the merging of hot air from the south and cold air from the north, moving at between 150 and 200 knots (230mph).

American officials said that the United States National Transportation Safety Board, based in Washington, would



Passengers aboard United Airlines Flight 826 sit beneath a damaged baggage locker and oxygen masks after their ordeal over the Pacific

investigate the incident, which took place in international airspace over the northern Pacific about 1,100 miles east of Tokyo. Japanese authorities also began interviewing witnesses to determine what procedures were followed and how the incident was handled

by the crew. Some passengers denied the seatbelt sign had been illuminated and this assertion will be at the heart of the investigation into the incident now under way. Tony Molinari, a United Airlines spokesman, said: "The seatbelt sign was on when the

plane was hit by severe turbulence. But there had to be folks who weren't belted."

In the most extreme example of such clear air turbulence, in 1966, a BOAC Boeing 707 crashed with the loss of all 124 people on board when the airliner was trapped in the lee

of Mount Fuji. That was a freak accident. Sunday's incident was also highly unusual because of the severity of the turbulence and the fact that the passengers appeared either to be totally unaware of the imminent danger or had ignored the seatbelt sign. A

spokesman for the British Civil Aviation Authority said aircraft were tested to withstand all weathers, but he stressed that, unless the airliner passengers wore seatbelts when they were told to do so, their safety could not be guaranteed.

US urges passengers to keep seatbelts fastened

FROM IAN BRODIE IN WASHINGTON

THE death and injuries caused when the United Airlines 747 hit turbulence over the Pacific drew renewed attention yesterday to an American government campaign for passengers to keep their safety belts fastened while seated.

With the slogan "Turbulence happens", the campaign was launched a year ago in the aftermath of two serious incidents. In-flight turbulence is the leading cause of injuries to airline passengers and flight attendants in non-fatal accidents in America, according to the Federal Aviation Administration in Washington. On average, 58 passengers are injured by turbulence in America each year through not wearing seatbelts when the "fasten seatbelt" sign is illuminated.

Between 1981 and 1996, 252

episodes of turbulence affected the larger airlines. As a result, two passengers died, 63 received serious and 863 minor injuries. Those who died were both not wearing seatbelts although the warning sign was lit. Of the 63 seriously injured, 61 were not wearing seat belts, 59 when the sign was on.

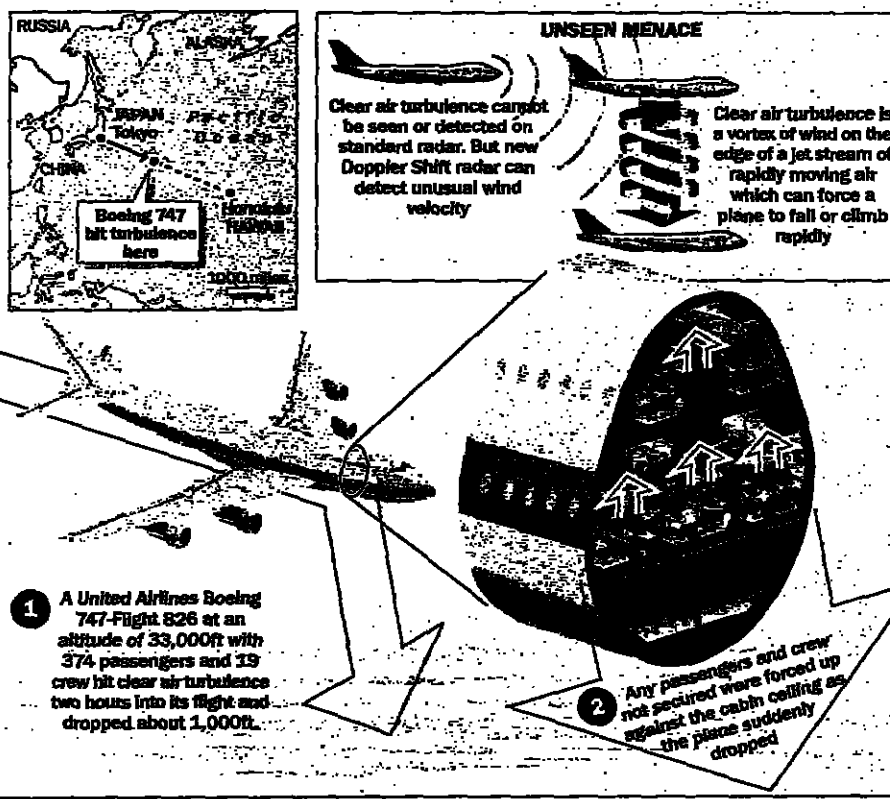
The statistics have persuaded the FAA to declare that most turbulence injuries can be prevented simply by buckling up. The FAA says turbulence can be created — even when the sky appears clear — through a variety of conditions, including atmospheric pressure, jet streams, waves of air flowing around mountains, cold or warm fronts and thunderstorms.

Two-thirds of turbulence accidents occur at or above

30,000ft. The United Airlines flight on Sunday between Tokyo and Honolulu was at 33,000ft.

The FAA campaign is supported by aviation safety organisations and the Association of Flight Attendants, whose members see, and suffer from, the effects of turbulence at first hand. Of those injured on Sunday, nine were cabin crew. In addition to strongly recommending seatbelts for adults, the FAA also advises that young children should be protected by approved infant restraint seats. Last June the FAA banned the use of booster seats and harness restraints for young children on US airlines. Tests showed that these devices, which do provide protection in cars, could cause internal and head injuries in an aviation emergency.

HOW CLEAR AIR TURBULENCE CAUSED HAVOC ON FLIGHT 826



New radar system can alert pilots to wayward winds

A RADAR system capable of detecting clear air turbulence is being developed by an American company, Allied Signal Aerospace (Michael Evans writes).

David Learmount, operations and safety editor of *Flight International* magazine, said the new system was being developed principally to detect wind shear at low altitudes.

These are dangerously wayward winds that can hit an aircraft as it lands. One of the secondary benefits of the new system, Mr Learmount said, was that it would also be able to detect clear air turbulence at high altitudes.

The new system operates on a completely different waveband, he said. However, he did not believe

it would become compulsory for all commercial airlines to carry the new radar.

"It will be expensive and will mean an increase in ticket costs, and if you get one death from clear air turbulence in ten years out of the 15 billion passengers that will fly over the same period it may not be worth it," he said.

The new system will be based on what is called a Doppler Shift radar that will be able to detect sudden changes in wind velocity.

If an aircraft is flying towards an invisible vortex of wind with a violent downdraft, the new radar will provide an early warning to the pilot.

Military aircraft are already fitted with a Doppler system, but it is not yet available to commercial aircraft.

British executives defy US over Cuba

By JON ASHWORTH AND OUR FOREIGN STAFF

ABOUT 100 British businessmen are to fly to Cuba on Air France's first Concorde trip to the country on New Year's Eve to explore investment opportunities. Cuba's news agency reported yesterday.

The visit will be a provocation to the US Administration, which threatens to blacklist any foreigners doing business with President Castro's state. The Helms-Burton Act seeks to blacklist companies which make use of former American-owned assets in Cuba, making it virtually impossible to invest legally in sectors such as sugar and telecommunications, which were once almost entirely US-owned.

The news agency, Prensa Latina, yesterday quoted Valentin Rodriguez, director of public relations for the Cuban tourism company Havanaur, as saying the trip was part of his company's effort to promote travel to Cuba from European nations, including Britain, France and Germany. Spaniards and Italians now make up the bulk of the Europeans who visit Cuba.

The Department of Trade and Industry said it had no knowledge of the visit. No DIT officials are involved, and no ministers will be accompanying the businessmen. The DIT organises regular overseas visits in the hope of creating investment opportunities for British companies.

There is nothing to stop European Union members from investing in Cuba, although pressure from America has limited the flow of potential investors.

Cuba is actively seeking foreign direct investment, particularly in banking, construction and industry. Premier, the British oil exploration company, is prospecting for oil and natural gas in Cuba. BAT Industries set up a cigarette joint venture in 1995 after a 35-year absence, while Unilever has formed a joint venture making toiletries.

Caspian states bypass Russia with lucrative export route

Turkmenistan's new gas pipeline could help the area to become the new Gulf, writes Richard Beeston

THE energy-rich Caspian Basin came a step closer to its dream of becoming the new Gulf yesterday, when Iran and the former Soviet republic of Turkmenistan opened a modest, but symbolically important, pipeline.

In a move likely to alter the regional balance of power and the future prosperity of the neglected Caspian nations, President Niyazov of Turkmenistan and President Khatami, his Iranian counterpart, mounted a podium and turned a large wheel to open the natural gas pipeline.

The 125-mile link will carry gas from the Turkmen Kordkuy field to the Iranian town of Kordkuy, just across the border. Although modest in scale, the pipeline could have huge implications well beyond the area. It is the first for the export of energy products that bypasses Russian territory. Moscow has had a stranglehold over the energy-rich nations of Kazakhstan, Turkmenistan and Azerbaijan because it controls the export pipelines.

Turkmenistan, which has the world's third-largest proven reserves of natural gas, was a neglected and impoverished republic under Soviet rule. After the collapse of communism, Moscow made it almost impossible for the country to receive any profit from its gas wealth and, since last spring, Turkmenistan has refused to

export via Russian pipelines. Now, with the export door opened, there are hopes that more ambitious projects will get under way. Over the weekend, the leaders of Turkey, Turkmenistan and Iran authorised Royal Dutch/Shell to go ahead with a feasibility study for a 940-mile pipeline to pump gas from the Central Asia gas fields across northern Iran and on to Turkey, from where it could reach Western markets.

Other proposals include plans for a pipeline to run

south through western Afghanistan to Pakistan, and another on the Caspian Sea bed for the export of gas through Azerbaijan and Georgia to the Black Sea.

America must be watching events with mixed emotions. Until now Washington has successfully blocked all attempts by Tehran to become involved in Central Asia. Now, however, the new moderate Iranian President is signalling, on his first foreign trip since being elected, that Tehran is eager and able to have a

slice of the largest new energy market in the world. He is not alone, however, and every major player in the international energy market is fighting for a place in the region, where some predict the birth of new Kuwait and Saudi Arabia in the coming decade.

Last month, Azerbaijan began pumping from a new offshore oilfield and exporting via Chechnya and Russia to the Black Sea coast. Next year it hopes to open a new pipeline through Georgia.

Nevertheless, the Central Asian nations are fearful that war, religious fanaticism and instability could spread from Afghanistan and Tajikistan. In the volatile Caucasus the threat of violence can never be ignored, particularly since all four nations in the region have unsettled conflicts on their territory.

Power deal: Russia and China yesterday signed a multibillion-pound nuclear power station deal, the first of several planned huge joint projects. In the latest show of warming relations between the two former communist rivals, Li Peng, the Chinese Prime Minister, greeted Boris Nemtsov, the Russian Deputy Prime Minister, for the signing ceremony. The deal, worth nearly £2 billion, involves the construction of two nuclear reactors in the port city of Lianyungang, in the eastern Jiangsu province.



Zardari after taking the oath yesterday

Bhutto's husband sworn in

Islamabad: Launching his journey from prison cell to parliament in an armoured personnel carrier, Benazir Bhutto's husband took the oath of office as a senator yesterday — nine months after he was elected — having won a court order.

Asif Ali Zardari, who has been in jail in Karachi since his wife's Government was dismissed last year, was flown to Islamabad, the Pakistani capital, and whisked away from the airport in a convoy of police vehicles.

Mr Zardari is being tried for the murder of Miss Bhutto's estranged brother, Murtaza, who died in a hail of police bullets outside his home in Karachi, just two months before her dismissal. Mr Zardari has denied that he ordered Murtaza's killing. (AP)

Mexico's ruling party denies link to massacre

FROM DAVID ADAMS IN MIAMI

MEXICO'S ruling Institutional Revolutionary Party (PRI) has denied any link with a Mayor charged over the massacre of 45 Indian villagers at Acteal, in the southern state of Chiapas.

The denial follows repeated allegations that the killings on December 22 were carried out by local party loyalists, of whom the Mayor, Jacinto Arias Cruz, whose domain includes Acteal, was one. Prosecutors charge that he provided the weapons used to kill the villagers, mostly women and children, and tried to cover up the incident. Forty people are facing charges in connection with the massacre.

One senior party official compared the killings with the bombing of the United States government building in Oklahoma City.

"If they [the bombers] belonged to one of the political parties, is the Republican or the Democratic Party guilty of the bombing? Of course not," Alfredo Phillips, the party's coordinator of international affairs, told *The New York Times*.

Local indigenous groups, including the rebel Indian Zapatista National Liberation Army, have blamed the Government and President Zedillo. Señor Arias, they say, was merely a pawn in a fight

for political domination in Chiapas.

"It is clear that the crime in Acteal was prepared with the direction of state government officials and the complicity of various ministries of the national Government," the rebels said in a statement released on Saturday and signed by their charismatic leader, Subcomandante Marcos.

He accused the Government of building "a bloody and complex machinery of war" to annihilate the indigenous people.

Those accusations have been echoed in the capital, where a rock concert was held to protest against what organisers called the government-sponsored massacre. Demonstrators held up placards reading "Zedillo, Murderer" and "How much more blood?"

The PRI blames the killings on religious and tribal disputes among various Indian communities in Chiapas.

But human rights groups and opposition politicians say party politics is behind much of the tension and systematic harassment of the Chiapas Indians. A climate of fear has been building for some time, and hundreds have died in clashes between PRI supporters and sympathisers of the Zapatistas.

Defiant Californian bars ready for 'Prohibition' raids over smoking ban

FROM TUN-KU VARADARAJAN IN NEW YORK

ALL of California except the great outdoors and private homes will effectively become one large no-smoking zone on New Year's Day.

As the new year begins, the latest measure in the state's panoply of anti-tobacco laws comes into force: a ban on smoking in all bars and casinos. With the exception of establishments on the state's American Indian reservations — which enjoy immunity from California's stringent smoking legislation — there can now be no puffing on

cigarettes, cigars or pipes in any "enclosed public space".

The forthcoming ban is the product of California's Smoke-free Workplace Act, which came into force on January 1, 1993. That law prohibited smoking in all "enclosed spaces at a place of employment", adding offices, shops, factories and restaurants to the already long list of no-smoking spaces, which then included all public buildings, such as bus and railway stations and even open-air baseball stadiums.

However, the 1993 law contained a two-year exemption for bars and casinos, the product of lobbying by the owners' organisations, which argued that a ban would hit their takings particularly hard.

That two-year period has now ended, and the state's health authorities have indicated that they will be enforcing the ban to the best of their abilities. Television viewers have been treated to weeks of "warm-up" publicity, in which barmaids are portrayed bemoaning their smoke-filled existence and giving thanks for the deliverance to come. The publicity emphasises a study, published recently in the *Journal of the*

American Medical Association, which shows that California's waitresses have higher death rates from lung disease than any other US female occupational group.

Yet bar-owners across the state are hinting darkly at a campaign of civil disobedience, conjuring visions of Prohibition-style raids by the police and health officials on bars which flout the law.

Beverly Mathis-Swanson, the owner of the One Double Oh Seven Club in Santa Cruz, said: "What's next, red meat or coffee? We want to respect the law... but if we end up getting arrested and

have to litigate, well, let's just see how this plays out."

Another bar-owner, David Berryhill, from Redondo Beach, said: "I think people are going to continue to smoke, absolutely." He has plans to establish a relief fund for fellow proprietors who are fined under the new law. The fine for the first offence is \$100 (£60), the second \$200 and the third \$500.

Opponents of the law have won the support of Brett Granlund, a Republican California assemblyman, who is himself a smoker. He has tabled technical questions to the State Department of Health.

Services, asking for a clear definition of "enclosed space". Mr Granlund contends that the definition contained in the no-smoking law — "four walls and a ceiling" — is so ambiguous as to be unenforceable. He argues that bars and casinos should be considered "open spaces" if they keep their doors and windows open.

Inevitably, he is also suggesting that owners of such establishments knock down one outer wall. Smokers could thus puff undisturbed, he argues, and California's climate is kind enough for this to be a viable option for many.

THE TIMES TUESDAY DECEMBER 30 1997

Chickens gassed in Hong Kong war on flu virus

BY JAMES PRINGLE

HONG KONG government workers wielding knives or using poison gas yesterday began the slaughter of 1.3 million chickens, ducks, geese, caged pigeons, quail and other edible fowl in an attempt to eliminate a virulent avian flu.

In this unprecedented killing of every single domestic fowl in the territory, many birds were dispatched with a quick slit of the throat.

The drastic elimination of poultry appeared largely backed by Hong Kong's anxious public, who have been crowding hospitals and clinics to have their colds and coughs checked lest they have the H5N1 avian flu virus.

This is an illness that in the past affected only chickens, but there is now a suggestion it can be transmitted between humans. There is no vaccine available to treat avian flu.

Hong Kong authorities are responding to public pressure to act decisively after four deaths, with 13 other residents confirmed as carriers and seven more as suspected carriers, according

to government figures. The incidence of the disease has spread fears of an epidemic. In 1968 a similar flu killed 40,000 people worldwide.

Health inspectors looked on as more than 1,000 stalls selling live poultry in Hong Kong as the killing began — a quick pulling back of each chicken's head and a swift slash at the throat — by workers, many called back from a holiday break. Near the carnage, people placidly ate meals.

On 160 chicken and 39 mixed poultry farms and two wholesale markets in the New Territories, birds were bundled into plastic containers into which carbon dioxide was pumped. At the poultry stalls, the dead or dying birds were pushed into black bin bags by seemingly nonchalant workers, many of them without masks or gloves.

The bags were sterilised with lime before being sent off for dumping in eight landfill sites; some critics say that the carcasses should be burnt to be sure the virus is eliminated. "Everybody is



Agriculture and Fisheries Department officials gather chickens in Hong Kong yesterday before gassing them inside a poultry farm

very busy right now with the operation," said a health official. "We hope to complete it in a day and a half." Most vendors, promised compensation that could exceed £3.15 million, seemed to approve of

the action, having seen a recent drop in sales after confirmation of the disease last August. "It has to be done," said one vendor. "The germs have to be killed off." Once all birds have been

killed, a cleansing and disinfection programme will begin. Imports of fresh chicken will start only when all the cleaning has been carried out, an action likely to take at least a week. About 80 per

cent of Hong Kong's chickens reportedly come from China, where health standards are often low.

Avian flu has struck another blow at Hong Kong's tourism industry, already

reeling from the economic downturn in Asia. However, World Health Organisation officials say the small number of people affected makes it unnecessary to issue any travel advice.

Aboriginal chiefs lay claim to great reef

FROM ROGER MAYNARD IN SYDNEY

AUSTRALIA'S bitter debate about Aboriginal territorial rights took a new turn yesterday when indigenous leaders laid claim to thousands of square miles of coastal waters, including the Great Barrier Reef.

In a controversial move that could affect fishing and resorts along much of Australia's coastline, Aboriginal groups announced they had made more than 120 claims for sea rights from northern Queensland to Victoria's Bass Strait.

Professional fishermen said that, if the courts ruled in favour of Aborigines, the claims could ultimately destroy Australia's lucrative in-shore fishing industry, worth more than £500 million. Bill Nagle, head of the Australian Seafood Industry Council, described the move as an "unnecessary act of aggression towards fishermen".

The latest Aboriginal claims follow a High Court ruling that Australia's indigenous people enjoy native title and access rights to land leased by farmers, and that the two could legally coexist.

Gangsters squeezing life out of Indian film industry

Bollywood is reeling from violent attacks worthy of its own output.

Christopher Thomas reports

BOLLYWOOD film-making has crashed, a victim of gangsters, censors, satellite television and an unprecedented run of box-office failures. Barely 16 of the 800-odd films produced in Bombay last year made money, threatening the world's biggest movie industry.

Mobsters finance much of Bollywood and interfere with the plot so that thugs are portrayed as avenging angels seeking old injustices — a boring formula producing mediocre films of grotesque violence. A bare breast is banned by the board of censors, but it is acceptable to garrote a man and trail his innards across the screen.

Audiences are leaving in droves. So are financiers, both criminal and legitimate, who fear the golden era of Bollywood is over as videos and foreign films invade their territory. The underworld has spread terror through Bollywood, and daylight gun attacks on actors and filmmakers add to the despair.

Big-time actors and producers hide behind intense security; few escape death threats from extortionists. Film-makers no longer boast when a movie is successful, because it invites demands for money from mobsters linked with corrupt police and politicians. The nation's financial capital is effectively run by gangsters unchecked by suborned law enforcement agencies.

Two murders in particular stunned Bollywood this year. Mukesh Duggal, a producer, was killed for defying the underworld, and Gulshan Kumar, king of Hindi film music cassettes, was gunned down after offering prayers at a Bombay temple where he went twice a day.

Mobsters have gained control of powerful trade unions in Bombay and no business is safe from their rackets. Shiv Sena (Army of Shiv), a

thuggish right-wing political organisation that shares power in the city with the hardline Bharatiya Janata Party, has close ties with the underworld — a formidable nexus that answers neither to government nor the law.

Falling out with Shiv Sena is unwise. Sanjay Dutt, for years one of the biggest heart-throbs of the screen, was jailed in 1995 for alleged involvement in bomb attacks in which several landmarks in Bombay were wrecked. The allegations, which never stuck, were doubtless trumped up because he had angered Shiv Sena.

Eventually he was freed and required immediately to pay his respects at the home of Bal Thackeray, the Shiv Sena leader, who had been upset that the Dutt family gave shelter to Muslims during anti-Muslim riots. Such scenes scare away foreigners who might otherwise seek to do business in Bombay, which has the country's biggest stock market and busiest port.

Mobsters hire themselves to landlords who want blocks of flats vacated, and to property developers seeking to clear land of slums. Politicians hire them to kill or threaten rivals, industrialists use them to break strikes.

For decades film-makers have relied on the mobsters for funding. The Government does not formally recognise Bollywood as an industry, so state banks are not allowed to lend money for film-making, forcing producers and directors into the arms of the underworld.

The highest paid Hindi film actors demand £200,000 a film, but few are getting it these days as Bollywood reels. Some top actors are taking a break because it is dangerous to be seen to make money in India's financial capital, a paradox that bodes ill for the future of Hindi films and, indeed, for Bombay.

POPPER/PHOTO



Sanjay Dutt, whose jailing for his alleged role in bomb attacks was probably arranged by criminals

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I accept that I'm different

Moira Petty meets a musical prodigy with Asperger's syndrome who has just made a film

When Joseph Erber celebrated his 13th birthday in December, it was marked with a raucous karaoke party for his schoolfriends. Far from wincing at the shrieks that rent the air, his mother smiled broadly.

"It was such a racket. I was cheered by that," recalls Deborah Roberts, who uses her maiden name. "He used to absent himself from his own birthday parties. When the children arrived he would go to his room."

Joseph's lack of sociability is one symptom of Asperger's syndrome, a mild variant of autism that was diagnosed three years ago. Others symptoms include poor motor skills and hand-to-eye co-ordination, difficulty with sequencing, and obsessive-compulsive behaviour.

Yet Joseph is also a musical prodigy. His composing skills have been recognised by national arbiters of classical music. At 11, he won the Sainsbury Pictures for Schools prize for composition. Last March his work for piano and viola, commissioned by the London Symphony Orchestra's lead viola player, Edward Vanderspar, was performed by the LSO at the Barbican.

And if learning to live with both his extraordinary ability and his disability while also dealing with peer pressures were not enough, Joseph has turned the cameras on himself to film his own *Video Diaries* for BBC2.

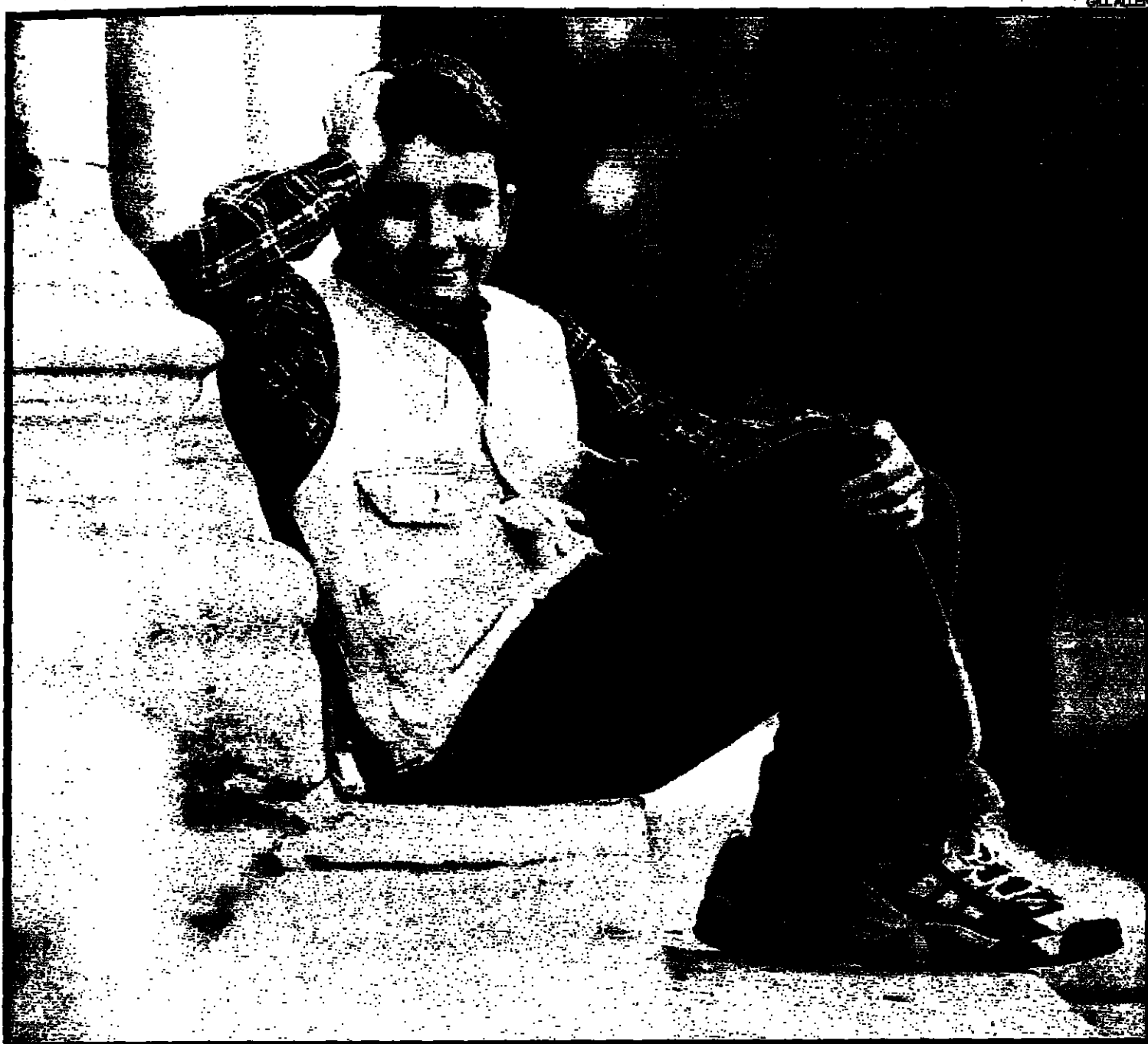
In a slightly expressionless voice, he sighs: "Because I don't play sport well, it has given me a reputation as a stereotypical boy. But I don't want to be like that. Other children say the pressure to write classical music is a bit sad, but as long as you enjoy it..."

The film shows Joseph trying to play football, toping aimlessly after the ball and rarely making contact, or helping to water the garden and managing to turn the hose on himself. In the flesh, although possessed of a certain shambling gait, there is little at first to separate him from any other awkward teenage boy.

Seated across a restaurant table, tucking into spaghetti, he gives an unblinking, long-lashed stare as he expounds on his philosophy of life. Then, for short periods, he seems to drift away, rattling his cutlery, gazing at the tablecloth and losing his grip on the conversation.

Joseph's interpersonal skills have improved greatly since he began therapy. He used to avoid eye contact, until the reason for it was explained to him. "I'm not mad," he says cheerfully. "I just need someone to talk to who won't take sides."

He is still prone to uncontrollable rages. Two hours earlier his father, James Erber, the avant-garde composer, had despaired of getting Joseph to London for our interview. Yet here he was, exhibiting formal good manners and pontificating on the ramifications of his parents' divorce in 1987. This means that every other weekend and for part of the holidays he shuttles between two homes in Sussex and southeast



At three Joseph Erber wrote the notes for a tune he called *My Mummy and Daddy*; by four he knew what his notation sounded like

London. "I'm not 100 per cent happy about that," he says. "Each household has a different way of doing things. But," he adds graciously, "they both employ good methods."

Complications include his father's remarriage to Morgan, a composer of musicals, and his mother's live-in partner, Bruno, an Italian sound engineer. "Sometimes I explain things wrong to Morgan and I get corrected. Then I tell her she's using the wrong tone of voice," says Joseph.

His relationship with Bruno, who cares for Joseph when his mother is away singing, can be explosive. On tape, against a background of lashing rain, Bruno pines for Rome. "What am I doing here, looking after this child who is always telling me what I should do because he knows better," he says mournfully, adding: "Still, I do care for him."

Joseph, for his part, vows to be nicer to Bruno. "I don't know how he can still find love."

Joseph recorded 11 hours of tape for his video diary, condensed by the programme's editors into 50 minutes. Having seen a preview, Joseph has some criticisms. He is scathing of two scenes in which his mother man-

handles him up the stairs to bed and he boomerangs down again: "They're just trying to be funny and clever."

His mother says these scenes are slapstick versions of her struggle to get Joseph to conform to normal behaviour. "He would not expose himself in his blackest moods for the cameras," she reveals. "He has flare-ups, like steam building up. He hasn't learnt to express disagreement and disappointment without rage. At one stage, it was very worrying."

Sometimes he wakes up in what I call an autistic mood. Time vanishes into a black hole while he reads cereal packets or is otherwise disinterested. But within his terms he's considerate and so loving.

"We can't have ordinary beach holidays with him. We were at a beach one day and Joseph spent the whole morning getting sand on his feet and then rushing to the tap to wash it off. He also has certain bedtime rituals that he wouldn't allow to be filmed. The pillows have to be dead centre, the bed has to be knocked against the wall three times, his slippers have to go under it."

"We use humour most of the time to get through this. He says 'I've got to do my rituals now', and I laugh and say: 'Well, I'm going downstairs then'." Joseph, too, sees comedy as a useful tool. "I've discovered a new, funny side of me. It's helped me to accept that I am different from other boys. It's hard not to go on and on about things. I've got a BBC2 kind of humour. I laugh and laugh about certain words and the other kids don't understand."

Joseph says his early years were "spent in a dream". His father recalls problems Joseph had following a film or pantomime. "He would ask the most basic questions. 'Who's that? What are they doing?' He couldn't understand emotional relationships. This Christmas he watched *Oliver!* on television and followed it for the first time."

Mr Erber believes that the non-representational aspect of music is a strong attraction for Joseph. At three, he wrote the notes for a tune he called *My Mummy and Daddy*; by four he knew what his notation sounded like. He took up the violin at five and the piano at seven. "I went through a phase of wanting to give up the violin

but my mother said it would be useful if I wanted to be a good composer."

Joseph, who watches *EastEnders*, plays computer games, and is fascinated by high-profile court cases, has recently begun listening to pop music. "It would be easy for me to write pop songs and get them in the charts. I could pay off the mortgage."

Video Diaries follows Joseph's progress in a recent music composition competition. His father declares that he would be "over the moon" if any of his much older students produced work of Joseph's calibre. His mother is seen exclaiming "God almighty!" at what seems to be his lack of progress.

"If he has a deadline, he must be ambitious," she explains. "I am not ambitious for him. I'm only concerned that he develops his full potential as a person. I'm prouder of the progress he's made in controlling his temper than of his talent."

"I don't worry about his future. I was sickened by one expert who said he was unlikely to marry. He'll make a wonderful husband for the right girl who understands him."

● *Video Diaries* will be shown on January 3 at 10.55pm on BBC2.

Don't go on holiday without the right jabs

The Christmas tree lights are still burning but even now the summer holiday brochures are beginning to arrive. Only a third will offer any advice on health, and even when they do it is usually only in general terms.

Forty-one million overseas trips were taken by British travellers in 1995, about 25 per cent to some faraway place designated as an "at risk destination" by doctors. These are the areas where the visitor — whether holidaymaker, business traveller, backpacking student or a returning expatriate — is at risk of acquiring a clinically significant infection.

Travellers are confused about the degree of risk: four out of ten are unaware of any threat to their health that might be posed by their destination, and one in ten, although fully aware of the risks, refuses to have appropriate vaccinations or to take prophylactic measures, such as anti-malarial treatment, even if it has been offered.

The vaccines needed to prevent infection will be in the doctor's refrigerator rather than in the patient's own medicine chest, but are no less important for that reason in preserving the household's health during the year.

The latest dispute to hit the NHS is over who should pay for such vaccinations. Previous governments of both political parties have always decreed that public health considerations demanded that the NHS should foot the bill for protection against any disease which, although frequently caught overseas, might later pose a health threat to the overall community. Hence the NHS paid for immunisation against diseases such as hepatitis A and B, typhoid, polio, tetanus and diphtheria, but conversely the travellers had to pay for injections against such conditions as rabies and yellow fever, where the risk was posed only to the bitten person.

Putting a stray dog in Bangkok, for instance, as a risky business, because at least 4 per cent of them have rabies, and each year a potentially rabid dog bites 100,000 people in the city, but the risk is entirely to the individual.

The dangers of relaxing efforts to inoculate travellers is a real one. Hepatitis A, which is easily prevented by simple injections, is caught by one in 300 unprotected visitors at luxury tourist hotels during annual holidays spent in risk areas. In the middle-aged and older it has an appreciable mortality of about 2 per cent. The risk is much greater in students and other hardy travellers who prefer to camp or backpack; one in 50

will return to this country either carrying, or having had hepatitis. The hazard is not over once they return to Britain — one in four who share their household will catch hepatitis A and, overall, one in six outbreaks of hepatitis A stems from infection brought from abroad.

The medical organisations most involved with the travelling public, the treatment of their diseases and the care in the communities with whom they live in Britain, such as the Overseas Doctors Association, the Primary Care Virology Group of Doctors, The Royal College of Nursing, the National Union of Students and the Patients Association, are all determined in their opposition to another proposed erosion in the standards of public healthcare. The BMA has still to make up its mind, torn between a desire to prevent any further erosion of the NHS and the need to save money. This saving may well be a false

MEDICINE CHEST

DR THOMAS STUTTFORD

economy as the treatment of infections caught overseas, now running at about £12 million a year, is not the only call on the Exchequer. The average case of hepatitis A involves 40 days off work. And many of the diseases caught overseas may involve benefit payment to the sufferers and their families for months or even years.

When booking next year's holiday, the householder should think about the health implications of the destination chosen and should consult his local GP or travel clinic about what is needed for his family's protection against the local diseases. Unfortunately, 14 per cent of GPs do not have the latest information, and 10 per cent of travel agents are unaware of health risks.

It is also grossly negligent, for instance, for people to take their children to an area where meningitis is common, such as The Gambia and Kenya, without obtaining protection against the local strains which can, fortunately, be prevented by inoculation. Everyone who travels, even to southern Europe and the Mediterranean, should be protected against hepatitis A, and preferably B, as well as typhoid.

All those who hope to have a holiday overseas should also be up-to-date with their immunisation against diphtheria, polio and tetanus.

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What I need is more rest, says Rachel Morris

The big sleep

I'm thinking duvets (king-size), double beds, mountains of white pillows, bed linen, pyjamas, alarm clocks (switched off) and cocoa. I've been shipped out by Christmas, talked out by the children, worn out by a lively working life — and now, like everyone else I know, I want to go to sleep.

The Nineties lifestyle, as my grandmother is always telling me, is a ruckus affair. And yet the curious thing is that I do not know anyone who, given the choice, would really give it up. The last generation — or so we were always told — was addicted to sex, drugs and rock 'n' roll, whereas my friends are all addicted to gossip and mobile phones, faxes and e-mails, and strong coffee. Everyone who can get it is overdoing it with work (and anyone with an espresso machine at home is a fully paid-up member of this club).

Modern technology is not only addictive, it has a way of getting you up. And if you add to a frenetic working life a couple of wakeful children (also peep up with television and videos) and a full round of school and family obligations, it is not surprising that, like hyperactive four-year-olds, we sometimes go too far and keel over in exhaustion.

I can tell how tired my friends are because whereas in our (mildly) vampish twenties we used to fantasise about seductive nightwear, now the favourite dream is of Marks & Spencer pyjamas and cups of cocoa.

Not long ago my husband and I bought a new duvet. It was hugely expensive and wonderfully comfortable. Even looking at that duvet



Sleep will soon be the kindest present you can give to friends

made my head begin to nod, and no sooner did I crawl under it than I was off to sleep as quick as a baby at the bottle (or so the saying goes — mine never did). Even the children fell prey to the duvet's wondrous powers and could be found, at last, wending their way towards the double bed, eyes shut, thumbs in mouths, comforters trailing behind them. We loved that duvet. After each other and the children it was the next thing we would have rescued if the house burnt down.

These days there is only one thing that anyone who has everything is unlikely to have, and that is sufficient sleep. The way things are going, sleep will soon be the kindest present you can give to your friends. We used to know a couple of diplomats who, being well ahead of their time, would organise sleeping Sunday lunches. If you turned up at their house on a Sunday afternoon, you would find a room full of men nodding off in front of the television, while in the next room women were doing the same in front of the

VCR. Dimly you could hear the sounds of children playing at the top of the house. All the hostess had to do was to right the glasses that were slipping from our sleepy fingers and keep the children happy on another floor.

At five o'clock or so she would hand round chocolates and strong coffee to rouse her guests. They were some of the nicest Sundays I can remember.

But then our friends took other diplomatic postings and now there's a dearth of sleeping Sunday lunches, in our part of London at least. So I would like to announce to everyone I know that we are saving up for a new double bed and that, once we have equipped it with more pillows and new bed linen and another wondrous duvet, you can all come to sleep on it, although I fear it will be a little crowded with small children and their toys.

And, it goes without saying, sleep is all that anyone has in mind.

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What makes you the way you are?

WHAT determines human behaviour? This controversial question will be debated by two of the world's leading scientists, Steven Pinker and Steven Rose, at a forum on Wednesday, January 21, at the Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1.

Chaired by Dr Susan Blackmore, the forum at the Institute of Education, 20 Bedford Way, London WC1, at 8pm, marks the publication of Pinker's *How the Mind Works* (Allen Lane, £25) and Rose's *Lifelines* (Allen Lane, £20). The admission price of £10 (concessions £7.50) includes £2 off the price of either book.

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JASPER GERARD



BENEFITS IN KIND

Tories have sound reasons to support welfare reform

Absence, it would appear, can make the mind grow sharper. Chris Patten's comments yesterday that the Conservatives should endorse rather than exploit Tony Blair's stand on welfare reform deserve serious consideration. The Tories will soon determine their response to the issue that is likely to dominate Parliament and politics in 1998. Mr Patten's intervention is interesting as, for much of his career, he has been an admirer of the post-1945 social settlement. That a figure associated with the paternalist section of his party has accepted the need for radical welfare reform is in itself significant.

There are three compelling reasons why the Conservatives should support Mr Blair's efforts to reconstruct the welfare state: principle, politics, and plausibility. Of these, the first is the most important. It has long been an article of faith among Tories that the British welfare state has been constructed on dubious assumptions, is excessively expensive, and is extraordinarily ineffective in its stated task of eradicating poverty. On this basis, Peter Lilley, as Social Security Secretary, undertook a review of benefits in the last Parliament. Although incremental not fundamental, his efforts were the single most impressive set of actions by a minister in the Major administration. The Tories should therefore welcome the Prime Minister's willingness to build on them.

It would also be shrewd politics. The Conservatives will win little fresh support from an opportunistic resistance to the Government. The Child Poverty Action Group is not waiting for its moment to anoint William Hague. If, instead, the Tories back the Prime Minister and urge him to think not only the unthinkable but the unthinkable, they will only increase the widespread unease felt on the Labour left. Conservative Party enthusiasm makes campaign Group rebellion inevitable. This would leave the impression, if inaccurate,

that Mr Blair actually needed Tory help to enact a central part of his agenda.

There is also the simple point of plausibility. The Conservatives will lack credibility if they oppose welfare reform. Mr Hague in a baseball cap or sipping cocktails at the Notting Hill Carnival is one thing; chaining himself to a wheelchair is another. The Conservatives have tried this already through their ill-considered opposition to the introduction of tuition fees for higher education. The sight of Stephen Dorrell seeking succour from the National Union of Students was utterly embarrassing. The Tories rendered themselves ridiculous. As a consequence, their broader views on the Dearing report are virtually irrelevant.

Mr Hague's approach on welfare reform must be entirely different. He should announce that he will adopt a bipartisan approach. That said, he can offer two constructive critiques. The first is that the exercise should not be annexed by the Treasury. Ethics as well as expenditure matter. The predominant reasons why people should be encouraged, and then obliged, to move from welfare to work is because it is in their own social and economic interest. Work would be the better option if the social security budget were £100 million rather than £100 billion.

His second argument should be that welfare reform is but part of a wider effort to redefine the relationship between the individual and the State. The most enlightened Republicans in the United States have embraced the notion of "empowerment" — an activist conservatism that seeks to enable the poor to take control of their own lives. The Prime Minister may sympathise with this but the overwhelming majority of his party does not. Mr Hague should seek to outflank new Labour not through opposition but agreement. It is also the position that would benefit his party and the country.

PHOENIX BERLIN

The irresistible rise of Germany's reborn capital city

The Berlin Airlift, which began fifty years ago next June, was the West's response to Stalin's attempt to starve West Berlin into submission. Had he succeeded, he would have consolidated the Soviet satellite in East Germany, and perhaps prevented the emergence of a West German state which was to become the linchpin of Nato. The travails of Berlin then and the city's triumph now provide a powerful metaphor for the dramatic recovery of Germany and the last eclipse of communism's dark shadow.

Three years of tension came to a crunch in June 1948, when the Allies, under pressure to end the postwar hyperinflation, allowed the currency reform devised by Ludwig Erhard and blessed by Konrad Adenauer, to go ahead. This was a political as well as an economic gamble: overnight, fortunes were wiped out in favour of a virtual *tabula rasa*. For the first time since the war, Germans in the Western sectors could trade not just in US dollars or packets of American cigarettes, but in a new and surprisingly hard currency: the Deutsche Mark. To the Russians, this was the ultimate provocation. It ensured that the division of Germany would endure, and its success would be a decisive victory for capitalism.

Stalin decided to retaliate against the isolated Western sectors of Berlin. The German sector of Leningrad had cost many hundreds of thousands of Russian lives, and it was assumed by the Kremlin that the Allies would not tolerate that level of civilian casualties, and would cave in. The blockade began on June 24, 1948, and lasted until September 30, 1949. In order to break the siege, 277,264 supply flights were flown — an unprecedented effort which cost the lives of

many aircrew. But nobody starved. Those epic months 50 years ago set the seal on Berlin's revival. After that, not even the building of the Berlin Wall in 1961 could break the city's spirit. But the Wall greatly added to the sense of isolation which lasted until 1989. During that surreal interlude, West Berlin was the playground of Utopian idealists, the laboratory of multiculturalism and the cradle of the avant garde.

This eccentric love of novelty belonged to a long Berlin tradition, perhaps explained by the fact that Berlin is the youngest of the great European capitals. Even Frederick the Great's Berlin still struck visitors as a garrison town; Schinkel and Schadow beautified it with austere neo-classicism, but only Bismarck and business turned Berlin into a true *Weltstadt*. It has no antiquities or traditions to compare with those of Rome, London and Paris; indeed, as a cultural repository it cannot compete with many of the other German-speaking cities. Berlin is a parvenu among cities. It has never been accepted, let alone loved, by all Germans as their capital — and it never will be.

And yet Berlin is again becoming capital of a united Germany. In the aftermath of reunification the Bundestag voted to move itself a thousand miles eastwards, back to the old *Reichshauptstadt*, in 1999. Following the precedent of the Weimar Republic, many Germans have begun to call the postwar period the "Bonn Republic". One day we may speak of the new Germany as the "Berlin Republic". The past 50 years, from physical resurrection to political rehabilitation, have been about surviving external threats. The next half-century is more likely to be about overcoming internal paralysis.



A NATIONAL TREASURE

One man's battle to rescue the glories of the country house

Polesden Lacey, Dyrham Park, The Wyne, Ham House: the rounded old names call the roll of a heritage, a fabric of the past that we cannot now imagine as other than securely held in trust. To walk through their rich interiors, their gardens and parklands and even their kitchen quarters is to open a channel in the mind through which aesthetic delight mixes with curiosity about the past and admiration for the panache of their proud creators. In the words of James Lees-Milne, they are "the people's palaces of our time" much as the cathedral was for those of the Middle Ages. They seem indestructibly ours. Yet their survival is owed, in literally hundreds of cases, to the passion, expertise and not least the social skills of this one man.

In 1936, when the young Lees-Milne landed his ill-paid and rather humble job with the National Trust, it was primarily as concerned with preserving landscape. As secretary to the trust's new country houses committee, he rode his bicycle or drove the trust's unreliable car up long drives, knocked on great portals and, to families whose pride it was to have lived there for centuries, put the case for making over their magnificent houses to the nation.

His work was to span more than half a century and to include not just the grandest structures but those he affectionately

described as the "illustrious obscure" gems of domestic architecture. The assessment of moulions and fanes, pierced balustrades, mouldings and wainscoting, was the easier part. Lord Esher sent him on his travels with the words: "You will find 90 per cent of country house owners sympathetic, 10 per cent odious and 100 per cent eccentric." As Lees-Milne was to record in his indiscreet, irresistibly vivid diaries of these encounters, he was to learn the art of a chameleon, to be "a mirror of other people's moods, opinions and prejudices". His diary is itself a precious portrait of an almost vanished society.

The houses he entered were often not as they are today; their owners were beset with dry rot, debt, death duties and, in wartime, the graffiti carved by troops billeted in the west wing. Paintings might be dirt-caked, plumbing dicey, walls running with damp. It was not just tact but a real empathy with their struggles that enabled him to win their trust, for the Trust. In the same spirit, he opposed the "museumisation" of these houses, seeking "to preserve their character unimpaired". Lees-Milne did more; he preserved an essential part of the character of this land. This was a very English kind of miracle, of improvisation allied to knowledge and persistence; no legacy is finer than that of this most civilised of Englishmen.

Belief in the NHS — with a proviso

From Lord Hunt of Kings Heath

Sir, Professors Alberti and Lessof of the Royal College of Physicians (letter, December 26) paint too bleak a picture of the difficulties the NHS faces in meeting increased patient expectations.

Of course, the NHS has a real challenge on its hands as every new medical invention comes on stream. But its record in almost 50 years has been one of outstanding success in accommodating the impact of advancing medical technology.

It is certainly true that some new treatments involve expensive care of patients whose conditions were previously untreatable. But other medical advances have allowed us simultaneously to improve the quality and contain resource pressures. New drugs can be expensive, but have the potential to reduce the need for hospital admission.

The fact is that over the years the NHS has used technology to upgrade its treatment, raise throughput, lower unit costs and still hardly increase its spending as a proportion of national output.

There is every reason to suppose that the NHS can continue to provide a broadly comprehensive health service, provided that the wide range of variation in managerial and clinical performance between different parts of the NHS can be ironed out. The Government's recent White Paper (report, December 10) offers some exciting new ideas for achieving this.

The crucial leadership role of the medical Royal Colleges in bringing the worse performers up to the level of the best would be of enormous help.

Yours sincerely,
PHILIP A. HUNT
(Director, National Association of Health Authorities and Trusts, 1990-97),
House of Lords,
December 27.

Welsh assembly

From Mr Julian J. Wragg

Sir, In answer to Mr Ray Kingdon (letter, December 23), who voted "yes" to a Welsh assembly upon the understanding that it would be based in Cardiff, I voted "no" to a Welsh assembly knowing full well, along with the huge number of Welsh people who voted as I did, or, significantly, who couldn't be bothered to vote at all, that such an expensive farce will ultimately prove about as much use or relevance as if it were based on the Moon.

Yours faithfully,
JULIAN J. WRAGG,
17 Heol-y-Llwyn,
Garth, Maesteg CF34 0DJ,
December 23.

From Dr Christine Laine

Sir, Is it not interesting that Mr Ray Kingdon voted "yes" to a Welsh assembly for exactly the same reason that many of us in North Wales voted "no"?

Yours faithfully,
CHRISTINE LAINE,
Springfield,
Marford, Wrexford LL12 8TF,
December 23.

Footling Scottish bill

From Mr John Turford

Sir, I trust that under the Scotland Bill the Scots are to pay for the entire cost of their new parliament building. Sixty-five million pounds for St Andrew's House, or even £50 million for a new-build site (News in brief, December 24) seems an awful lot of money for a glorified parish council. I hope they think it's worth it.

Yours faithfully,
JOHN TURFORD,
6 Radbrook Road,
Shrewsbury, Shropshire SY3 9BA,
December 24.

Gaelic links

From Mr Geoffrey H. Lloyd

Sir, You report (News in brief, December 17) that the Government has launched a project to promote Gaelic and its traditions to Scotland, and links between Scotland and Ireland costing £6 million.

Where does the demand for this come from? And how can satisfying an obvious minority group be defended in the face of universal belt-tightening both in national and local government? The Government constantly reminds us that its policies are all about priorities. I would be unimpressed if the Scots were to spend any of their existing (generous) subsidies from Westminster on this initiative, to offer new money leaves me incredulous and baffled.

Such an outlay might be better invested in making good the appalling shortcomings in the present use of English throughout the UK.

Lonely money, perhaps: taxpayers' money, never.
Yours sincerely,
GEOFFREY H. LLOYD,
Longacre,
73 High Street,
Little Wymondley,
Cambridge CB1 3PY,
December 18.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

1 Pennington Street, London E1 9XN Telephone 0171-782 5000

Diocesan links across the Channel

From the Reverend Canon Roger Greenacre

Sir, Ruth Gledhill's report (December 27) on the planned twinning between Winchester and Florence (which we in Chichester welcome unreservedly) and without the least wringing of jealousy states that the links between dioceses in the Church of England and others around the world "are nearly always with Anglican dioceses or with those of Lutheran or other Protestant churches". It goes on to say that "Winchester is thought to be the first to open negotiations with a Roman Catholic diocese in Italy".

There are at least five diocesan links between the Church of England and the Roman Catholic Church in France. Perhaps the oldest is between Chichester and Chartres; its origins go back to a civic twinning of the two cities in 1929, which soon extended to a twinning between the two cathedrals and the two dioceses.

The links are now extremely close: the Bishop of Chartres led a pilgrimage of his diocese to Chichester in 1996 and in 1998 the Bishop of Chichester will (for the fourth time since 1977) be leading a pilgrimage from here to Chartres, which will include (for the second time) the participation of our cathedral choir.

Links between dioceses and parishes of the Church of England with their counterparts in France are so frequent that in 1990 the official Anglican-Roman Catholic Committees of

France and England published guidelines for those involved entitled *Twinning and Exchanges: Jumelages et Echanges*.

Other European countries are also partners in such twinnings: our own diocese, for example, has very close links with the Church in Bavaria, both with Lutherans in Bayreuth and with Catholics in Bamberg.

Last February an official twinning agreement was signed in Chichester between the cities of Chichester and Ravenna after a similar ceremony in Ravenna the previous December. The official delegation which went to Ravenna for the first ceremony included the Dean of Chichester, while the Archbishop of Ravenna was represented in Chichester by a high-ranking prelate both at the civic ceremony on the Saturday and at the cathedral sung Eucharist on the Sunday.

Yours faithfully,
ROGER GREENACRE
(Chairman, Chichester Diocesan European Ecumenical Committee),
4 Vicars Close, Chichester PO19 1PT,
December 27.

From the Venerable B. H. Lucas

Sir, Lincoln has been twinned with Bruges for about two decades.

Yours faithfully,
BRIAN LUCAS,
The Savage Club,
1 Whitehall Place, SW1A 2HD,
December 27.

It might even encourage more children from maintained schools to apply to study at Oxbridge.

Yours faithfully,
P. G. DRAZIN,
University of Bristol,
School of Mathematics,
University Walk, Bristol BS8 1TW,
December 23.

From the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Buckingham

Sir, The plans by Oxford and Cambridge colleges to reintroduce fees in an effort to maintain their independence and to preserve the tutorial system of undergraduate instruction demonstrate clearly the presence of the founders of the University of Buckingham 21 years ago.

As the only independent university in Britain, Buckingham has been able to maintain the tutorial system and the personalised education this provides because of our freedom to generate adequate income to maintain the student/staff ratio required.

Yours sincerely,
ROBERT H. TAYLOR,
Vice-Chancellor,
The University of Buckingham,
Buckingham MK18 1EG,
December 22.

Church of Ireland view

From Mr Mike Lawlor

Sir, Mr Robin Bury (letter, December 23) disapproves of President McAleese taking Communion in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin, from a priest of the Church of Ireland. I doubt whether his disapproval is at all representative of how we as a Church reacted.

In a recent opinion poll among the general population of the Republic a very high percentage of those interviewed supported the President's gesture. Among members of the Church of Ireland there would be very few who would not have been touched by such a brave and truly bridge-building action. In fact most of us cannot see what the fuss is about.

I would guess that most members of the Church of Ireland, and a large number of Roman Catholics in the Republic, would hold similar beliefs about the nature of the Eucharist to those attributed to Queen Elizabeth I: "Twas God the word that spake it, He took the bread and broke it, And what the word did make it, That I believe, and take it."

Yours sincerely,
MIKE LAWLOR,
31 Carysfort Hall,
Carysfort Avenue,
Blackrock, Co Dublin,
December 27.

Topic of Capracorn

From Mr David Brewer

Sir, It is interesting to have Michael Gove's alternative reading of *It's a Wonderful Life* (December 27) but I'm afraid his interpretation is tosh.

One of the great strengths of American society, which warms the heart of a visitor, is the value placed on the local community, and the message of Frank Capra's film is that this has to be fostered, if necessary at the expense of profit, by individuals. This message was particularly appropriate in 1946, when the United States found itself both incomparably rich in resources and opportunities and freed from the constraints of war.

That the flourishing of the local community is ultimately down to individuals, who may have to make sacrifices to achieve it, is something that today's promoters of grand schemes of communitarianism would do well to remember — here, as well as in the United States.

Yours sincerely,
DAVID BREWER,
32 Nightingale Road,
Hampton, Middlesex TW12 3HX,
December 27.

Alternative medicine

From Dr Max Prola

Sir, Peter Barnard, reviewing (December 19) a Channel 4 documentary in which the symptoms of a patient suffering from ME subsidised after a course of alternative medicine, concludes that "if something works then it must be a legitimate treatment, even if nobody can properly explain why the treatment works".

Therein lies the source of much of the erroneously placed faith in alternative medicine. The amelioration of symptoms following some kind of treatment does not constitute proof of the treatment's efficacy, not until the possible role of other influences has been ruled out. Ninety per cent of people suffering from headache would report a cure the following morning if they were to sing a chorus of *Onward Christian Soldiers* before bedtime.

We can conclude that a treatment "works" only after the effects of variables such as the self-limiting nature of many illnesses, placebo response, informal assessment, etc. have been carefully controlled.

Sincerely,
MAX PROLA,
The Croft,
Ditchfield Lane, High Legh,
Knutsford, Cheshire WA16 0QN,
December 19.

Who's sorry now?

From Dr A. R. A. Hobson, FBA

Sir, The urge to apologise for events in the historical past is one of the more interesting aspects of modern British culture. The pilgrimage to Jerusalem to apologise for the First Crusade (letter, December 18) is a recent example.

Is this impulse purely British, or will it spread to the Continent? May we expect a delegation of Italians to apologise for Julius Caesar's invasion; or, for that matter, of Turks anxious to apologise for invading the Byzantine Empire and winning the Battle of Manzikert, thus provoking the Crusades in the first place?

I have the honour to be, Sir, your obedient servant,
ANTHONY HOBSON,
The Glebe House, Whitbury,
Fordingbridge, Hampshire SP6 3QW,
December 22.

Letters that are intended for publication should carry a daytime telephone number. They may be sent to a fax number — 0171-782 5046. e-mail to: letters@the-times.co.uk

Call for a start on Severn Barrage

From the Chairman of the Energy Board, Institution of Civil Engineers

Sir, In the wake of the recent Kyoto conference on climate change may I reinforce the call by Professor Ian Fells (letter, December 4) for the building of the Severn Barrage. Completion of this project would provide the UK with pollution-free electricity throughout the next century and beyond, reducing its annual emissions of carbon dioxide by 3 per cent.

With reasonable maintenance the barrage would last indefinitely and its energy source will be virtually unaffected by climate change. It would provide predictable, virtually inflation-proof electricity at a cost of less than 0.5p/kWh following amortisation of the construction costs, compared with a current average "pool" price of some 2.6p/kWh. During its construction, it would provide some 200,000 man-years of employment, much of it away from the barrage site in the manufacturing regions of the UK.

A start on the barrage now, funded through the Private Finance Initiative, would enable substantial completion by 2010. This would meet the Government's objectives of reduced carbon dioxide emissions and greater reliance on renewable energy and sustainable development.

Yours etc,
STEVE TAYLOR,
Chairman, Energy Board,
The Institution of Civil Engineers,
One Great George Street, SW1P 3AA,
December 29.

Cars for cities

From Mr Kenneth Peter

Sir, In 1964 Ernest Marples, then Minister of Transport, appointed "Harold Cox of Metal Box" (later, Lord Kings Norton) to chair a study of the design of vehicles for use in towns. The resultant *Cars for Cities* report was made to Barbara Castle in 1967 but was overshadowed by Labour's attempt to formulate an integrated transport policy.

The study went far beyond mere car design to explore many aspects of urban road transport, from vehicle size and use to pollution and safety. Promoters of very small car designs of the "elk-challenged" kind, such as the new Mercedes (report, November 13), could have saved themselves vast wasted investment had they but read the section on personal transport.

Perhaps Lord Kings Norton's death and your obituary (December 22) will, 30 years on, prompt the present generation of transport policymakers, vehicle manufacturers and traffic engineers to get hold of a copy of his report and re-read it.

I am, Sir, your obedient servant,
K. PETER

(Administrative Secretary,
Cars for Cities Study, 1964-67),
Westgate Cottage, High Street,
Thornham, Hunstanton PE26 6LX,
December 22.

Social whirl

From Professor Sir Bernard Crossland, FRS, FEng

Sir, Your report of December 11 on the previous evening's "celebrity reception" at No 10 gave prominence to TV and radio personalities who were present. However, you failed to report what I think was of much greater significance, the presence of Mrs Pamela Liversidge, the first Lady President of the Institution of Mechanical Engineers in 150 years.

I hope that her invitation was not only a recognition of her success as an engineer and of the key role of women in our profession, but also a recognition of the pivotal importance of engineering in our society.

Yours faithfully,
BERNARD CROSSLAND,
16 Malone Court, Belfast BT9 6PA,
December 16.

Déjà vu

From Mr John F. Martin

Sir, Any of your readers who have grown especially fond of their 1997 calendars may like to know that they can put them away until 2003, when they will be completely accurate apart from the year number. I shall be putting my 1975 calendar (also used in 1986) into extended hibernation until then. Leap years account for the variations in the lengths of these gaps.

For 1998, a calendar for 1987 will suffice.

Yours truly,
JOHN F. MARTIN,
57 Tyeohurst Hill,
Loughton, Essex IG10 1BZ,
December 29.

Legislation for life

From Mr David Green

Sir, There's no need to ban human reproduction (letter, December 29). By the time our children have repaid the cost of their education and pre-paid the cost of their pensions it will be too late for them to find the money to rear children.

Yours faithfully,
DAVID GREEN,
Rhyd yr Harding, Castle Morris,
Nr Haverfordwest SA62 5EJ,
December 29.

[illegible]

THE TIMES

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BUSINESS EDITOR Patience Wheatcroft

TUESDAY DECEMBER 30 1997



Barry Gibson said that consumers were now shopping even later in the run-up to Christmas while the catalogues division gave Littlewoods a boost

Littlewoods fails to lift spirits in high street

By FRASER NELSON

LITTLEWOODS' yesterday became the first leading retailer to confirm that the peak Christmas shopping season fell well below expectations.

The privately owned company said sales in its department stores were 7 per cent lower in the nine weeks to December 27. A last-minute spree appears to have eased the pain, with sales down just 1 per cent in the final three weeks.

The company, one of Britain's biggest retailers, played down the setback, claiming like-for-like sales were up about 5 per cent after adjusting for discontinued product lines such as wines and spirits and children's clothing.

Barry Gibson, chief executive, said: "Our results seem to reflect a mood by the consumer to shop ever later. The last three or four weeks were very strong, and took us all by surprise, so we are very happy. We pursued full-price sales, and didn't start discounting until after Christmas - and we have been able to make margin increases as a result."

Littlewoods has long been regarded as the high street's sleeping giant, having underperformed many of its rivals for several years. Efforts have recently been made to revitalise the chain, with a new manage-

ment at the helm, and its latest figures may reflect a degree of recovery against the background of generally subdued retail demand this Christmas.

Littlewoods' overall results were buoyed by profits from its home shopping division, which now accounts for 60 per cent of the business. Its sales grew 12 per cent in the past nine weeks, with a 24 per cent jump in the last 21 days before Christmas. City analysts said the results gave few clues to the overall picture of high

street Christmas sales but added weight to reports of a substantial rush in the three days before Christmas.

Robert Miller, director of retail research at Kleinwort Benson, said it was still too soon to pass judgment on Christmas sales. "It is a mixed picture," he said. "They [Littlewoods] had a good, late Christmas in home shopping. It was always their plan to protect gross margin, so the sales figures are not that surprising." Clive Vaughan, an analyst at Ver-

dict, the research house, said: "When the dust has settled, there will almost certainly be like-for-like growth for the retailers. They were expecting a great boom and bonanza but what they have got was quite an ordinary good Christmas."

Other leading retailers are not expected to publish trading statements until early in the new year. Goldsmiths, the jewellery chain founded by Jurek Plasecki, played down fears of a high street slowdown. It said

its 130 shops had seen overall sales increase 14 per cent in December, and a 7.9 per cent increase on a like-for-like basis. Shares of Goldsmiths added 12½p to 275p.

Money circulation figures from the Bank of England added to the evidence suggesting a late spending spree in the three shopping days before Christmas. The Bank said that bank withdrawals were up 12.6 per cent in the last week of Christmas - double the increase a month earlier.

Littlewoods' results were keenly awaited as the first solid indicator of the Christmas season. Fears of a high street meltdown had been heightened by Knickerbox, the lingerie chain, which fell into administration last week. It blamed "spalling" high street sales before Christmas.

Barclays Bank has added its voice to the growing number of financial institutions sceptical about a retail slump. It said sales through its Barclaycard had risen 8 per cent in the last weekend of Christmas, excluding the three shopping days that Littlewoods credited with providing much of its sales growth.

Max Taylor takes office as chairman of Lloyd's on Friday.

Big Apple has rotten time

US RETAILERS also complain that Christmas sales were worse than expected despite low unemployment and continuing strong economic growth (Oliver August writes from New York).

Analysts predict several chains are ripe for bankruptcy after the failure of Nobody Beats The Wiz, an electronics group. Christmas sales had been expected to grow by 4.5 per cent, but early estimates point to growth of about 3 per cent. Retailers started to discount goods before Christmas. Even large department stores such as Macy's were forced to cut prices by up to 50 per cent in the third week of December.

For the past two years, sales growth in the Christmas period has hovered around 3 per cent. In the preceding three years, growth reached between 7 and 8 per cent. The

Christmas period usually accounts for 25 per cent of US retailers' annual sales.

Roseland Wells, an economist at the National Retail Foundation, said: "It doesn't look like it's going to be a barometer, which is disappointing because the economy is so good."

None of the large retail chains has made any trading statements so far. But Sears said the post-Christmas period would be vitally important to this year's sales performance. A number of US chains are fighting for survival. Nobody Beats The Wiz, a stereo and video retailer, suffered from a margin squeeze and is now looking to be acquired. Other troubled chains include Caldors and Bradlees. Retail analysts are predicting that the shakeout expected in 1997 will now take place in 1998.

British banks meet as part of worldwide Korean effort

By JANET BUSH, ECONOMICS EDITOR

BRITISH banks met in London yesterday to consider their response to the financial crisis in South Korea as part of a global effort to launch a credit lifeline for the country.

HSBC Holdings, parent company of Midland Bank, which has strong links with Hong Kong and the Far East, is acting as co-ordinator for UK banks with exposure to South Korea.

Bank of England figures show that UK banks had loans outstanding to South Korea of \$6 billion (£3.5 billion) at the end of June. According to the Bank for International Settlements total loans outstanding to South Korea at the end of 1996 were \$99.5 billion with \$24.3 billion accounted for by Japan.

The meeting of UK banks took place in tandem with meetings of leading banks around the world to discuss rolling over loans to South Korea. The key gatherings took place at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York, responsible for overseeing the American banking system.

In Tokyo, reports suggested that "some" of a group of ten Japanese banks were willing to roll over short-term credits to South Korea.

In Frankfurt, Deutsche Bank pledged "constructive co-operation" from German banks which met yesterday. It said: "The participants of the discussions regarded it as a priority to safeguard the stability of the international financial system."

This round of top level bank meetings coincided with the first evidence of the devastating effect of the financial crisis on Asian economies.

In South Korea, figures showed that domestic machinery orders fell 34.6 per cent in

the year to November against a 29.8 per cent rise in the previous year. Domestic construction orders fell 23.3 per cent in November compared with a 48.5 per cent rise in November 1996, suggesting that investment is being ruthlessly cut.

The LG Economic Research Institute, an independent think-tank, predicted that the economy would contract in 1998, the first fall in growth in nearly 20 years.

In Tokyo, the Economic

THE traditional Christmas rally in share prices got under way as investors shrugged off worries about subdued high street trading and the financial crisis in the Far East. The FTSE 100 index rose 98.5 to 5,112.4. However, with just two days' share trading left this year it seems unlikely the 1997 closing peak of 5,330.8, struck in October, will be challenged.

Trading was also lively on the foreign exchange, where the pound rose almost three pence to DM2.9883 and half a cent to \$1.6746, lifting the pound index to 105.6, against a 12-month high of 106.6.

Planning Agency said that turmoil in Asia could push Japanese growth down by around 0.4 per cent to 0.6 per cent over one to two years. On the stock market, the Nikkei 225 index slid to its lowest level since 1995.

The Government of South Korea yesterday approved legislation to reform its financial sector. A key committee in South Korea's National Assembly approved legislation which should lead to the passing, as early as next week, of 13 reform bills.

BUSINESS TODAY

STOCK MARKET INDICES

FTSE 100	5112.4	(+98.5)
FTSE All share	2386.74	(+38.67)
Nikkei	14775.22	(-27.28)
New York	7788.43	(+107.12)*
Dow Jones	950.27	(+13.81)*

US RATE

Federal Funds	5 1/8%	(n/a)
Long Bond	102 1/8%	(...)
Yield	5.92%	(...)

LONDON MONEY

3-month Interbank	7 1/8%	(P=1%)
Libor 6m	122	(121 1/2%)

STERLING

New York	1.6705*	(n/a)
London	1.6746	(1.6707)
DM	2.9888	(2.9850)
FF	9.9940	(9.9225)
SF	2.4866	(2.3280)
Yen	217.36	(216.58)
£ Index	105.6	(104.8)

DOLLAR

DM	1.7865*	(n/a)
DM	5.9790*	(...)
SF	1.4472*	(...)
Yen	139.02*	(...)
£ Index	108.7	(108.4)

Tokyo close Yen 130.08

NORTH SEA OIL

Brent 15-day (Mar)	\$17.10	(n/a)
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GOLD

London close	\$291.85	(\$296.00)
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* denotes midday trading price

Battle of the boozers

The battle of the boozers looks set to be reignited next year as about £1.5 billion is pumped into Britain's pubs. The bulk of the investment, which will exceed the record levels of the late 1980s, is being spent on outlets as operators rush to cash in on demand for new pub concepts. Bass, which last year focused on brands such as All Bar One and O'Neill's, plans to spend at least £300 million in the coming year, compared with £91 million in 1993, while Whitbread is investing at the rate of about £200 million a year.

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Value of flotations slumps as buyouts break record

By MARTIN WALLER

THE City's appetite for new company flotations has slumped dramatically, with the value of all this year's stock market debuts expected to fall by two-thirds on the figures for 1997, having been totted up. But by contrast the buyout business is booming and set to reach a record high.

A study by KPMG Corporate Finance shows that institutional investors are shunning smaller companies, with the value of all those businesses coming to market falling from £10.1 billion in 1996 to just £3.5 billion this year, excluding demutualisations.

But the Centre for Management

Buyout Research says the total value of UK buyouts and buy-ins will break the £10 billion barrier this year, £2.6 billion higher than in 1996, which was itself a record.

Neil Austin, head of new issues at KPMG Corporate Finance, said institutions had huge cash flows to invest but were unwilling to pick through new issues in search of value. Bigger stocks outperformed their smaller brethren this year, leading institutions to focus their investment policy on larger companies. Meanwhile the consolidation taking place among fund managers meant there were fewer buyers.

Temps, page 22

Balance shifts at Lloyd's as 2,000 names resign

By JON ASHWORTH

MORE than 2,000 names are resigning from the Lloyd's insurance market, tipping the scales in favour of corporate capital members for the first time.

Corporate members, admitted for the first time just three years ago, will speak for £6 billion of capacity at Lloyd's in 1998, compared with £4.5 billion in 1997. Their share of capacity rises from 44 per cent to 59 per cent. Lloyd's will be able to underwrite £10.13 billion in potential insurance claims next year, slightly down on £10.3 billion in 1997.

Just over 2,000 names - individuals who use their wealth to back under-

writing at Lloyd's - are to cease underwriting with effect from December 31. About 6,835 names will continue to underwrite on an unlimited liability basis in 1998, supplying £4.03 billion of capacity. Numbers peaked at 32,000 worldwide in 1988, before a string of disasters prompted a run of crippling insurance claims.

About 1,105 names will continue underwriting for 1998 on a limited liability basis. Sir David Rowland, the departing chairman of Lloyd's, is among those to have taken advantage of conversion vehicles allowing them to limit their losses.

Max Taylor takes office as chairman of Lloyd's on Friday.

Davies jets to £1m Airtours bonus

By DOMINIC WALSH

ROGER DAVIES, who stepped down in April as chairman of Going Places, the travel agency arm of Airtours, was given a £1 million bonus earlier this year under a shadow share option scheme.

Mr Davies, who remains a non-executive director of Airtours, received total remuneration in 1997 of £1.19 million, compared with just £290,000 in 1996. The £1 million bonus was paid out under the terms of a previous long-term

option scheme based on the company's share performance.

Since the travel industry's annual horribles in 1995, when overcapacity led to severe discounting, shares in Airtours have soared from less than 400p to £12.10, at yesterday's close. Earlier this month, the group unveiled a 39 per cent rise in pre-tax profits to £120 million, and reported that bookings for next summer were running 15 per cent of a year ago.

The group's performance triggered maximum bonuses for the entire Airtours board. David Crossland, chairman, saw his pay rise from £580,000 to £666,000, including £244,000 in bonuses, while Harry Coe, who recently moved from finance director to managing director, saw his package rise from £459,000 to £562,000. Total emoluments for the board, including non-executive directors, rose from £2.69 million to £4.05 million.



Crossland's total pay rises

STOCK MARKET

Stock Market Writer
of the YearIndex in festive spirit but
turnover is exaggerated

INVESTORS yesterday enjoyed some of the seasonal festivity that has been lacking of late.

A near 100-point leap in the FTSE 100 index as more than 500 million shares changed hands is the stuff classic bull markets are made of. But just like the traditional pantomime, closer inspection reveals not everything is as it should be.

True, the index managed to close at its best of the day, or thereabouts, sporting a gain of 98.5 at 5,112.4. But the turnover level of 512 million shares was exaggerated by the pre-arranged buyback of British Gas "B" shares - all 237 million of them. BG closed a further 4.5p dearer at 281p.

Add to this a put-through in five million British Steel shares at 128.5p - their closing price, up 1p - and the overall picture starts to look a little different with genuine turnover amounting to only 270 million shares. Much of yesterday's early pace was futures-led, sprinkled with the usual batch of new year share recommendations and take-over tips.

Nevertheless, the absence of sellers yesterday and the opening 100-point plus rise on Wall Street means that brokers remain upbeat about prospects for the remainder of the year. They are talking it up to the 5,200 level by the year end.

Stock shortages prevented double-digit rises among leading shares with Siebe the best performer among the top 100 with a leap of 80p, or 7.2 per cent, at £11.90. The buyers also came in for Unilever, up 25.2p at 510p, Marks & Spencer, 29p better at 610p, Rentokil Initial, 13p to 267p, Tesco, 23.5p to 507p, and Carlton Communications, 20p to 470p.

There was further demand for the financials as the speculators tried to select the likely bid candidates for 1998. Top of the list is Guardian Royal Exchange, up 17p at 332p, followed by Abbey National, 39p better at £11.09, Northern Rock, 8p dearer at 588.5p, Sun Life, 29p higher at 445p, Norwich Union, 10p stronger at 390p, and Bank of Scotland, 20p dearer at 570p. Lloyds TSB, a likely predator, rose 22p at 770p.

Southern Electric, 11p better at 512p, continues to be viewed as a takeover target. A previous attempt by one of the power generators a few years



Sir Geoffrey Mulcahy saw Kingfisher increase 7p to 839p

back was blocked by the Government.

Kingfisher, whose chief executive is Sir Geoffrey Mulcahy, rose 7p to 839p. Another company in bid talks is Independent Parts, up 20.5p at 134.5p. The automotive parts specialist says an bid is likely to be priced at around 140p, giving the group a price tag of £33.4 million.

Matthew Clark, the drinks distributor, continued to feel

The healthcare specialist said talks had now ended but it could not rule out the possibility of more acquisitions.

Biocompatibles celebrated European regulatory approval for its coronary treatment with a jump of 30p to 485p.

There was some return to normality at Danika Business Systems as the price rallied 8p to 230p after briefly touching 247.5p.

Brokers say Spargo Consultants, the software specialist and servicing group, may be worth looking at in the new year. The price closed unchanged at 147.5p, way below its peak of 174.5p. The group should enjoy a boom on the back of the "millennium bug".

Spargo made £1.2 million last year with £1.4 million expected this time round.

GIIT-EDGED: Revived fears that interest rates could rise by a further half-point to 7.75 per cent in the new year took some of the burriness off the recent strong performance by the bond market.

The experts are claiming that the Bank of England may move again if post-Christmas sales in the shops prove stronger than expected.

In the futures pit, the March series of the long gilt finished £1.16 lower at £122 in thin trading. In longs, Treasury 8 per cent 2021 firmed a tick to £122.75, while among shorter-dated issues Treasury 7 per cent 2002 eased a tick to £102.14.

NEW YORK: Shares held sharp, early gains amid lessening investor jitters over South Korea's financial troubles. The Dow Jones industrial average was up 107.12 points to 7,786.43 at midday.

the ill-effects of its recent profits warning with the price hitting a new low of 157p before rallying to reduce the fall to just 3p at 163.5p. Rival Merrydown, which sweetened its profits warning with news of a bid approach this month, was steady at 51.5p.

Last week's profits warning continued to weigh heavily with IIP Group, 1p lighter at 31.5p. The packaging group has seen its price fall from a peak of 78.5p this year.

Abacus Recruitment, the best-performing share of 1997, continued to leave the rest of the market in its wake with a leap of 67.5p to a new peak of 327.5p. The price has come up from a low of 84.5p this year.

By contrast the worst-performing share of the year was BKG Resources, which slipped 1p to a new low of 10.5p. That compares with its peak for the year of 23p.

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New York (midday):
Dow Jones 7786.43 (+107.12)
S&P Composite 950.27 (+13.81)

Tokyo:
Nikkei Average 14755.22 (+7.38)

Hong Kong:
Hang Seng 10502.09 (+160.55)

Amsterdam:
AEX Index 908.22 (+27.89)

Sydney:
ASX 2576.3 (+31.6)

Frankfurt:
DAX 4197.37 (+75.58)

Singapore:
Strait Times 1517.94 (+34.58)

Brussels:
General 14246.83 (+228.87)

Paris:
CAC-40 2594.46 (+46.19)

Zurich:
SIX Gen 1251.90 (+28.00)

London:
FTSE 100 5112.4 (+98.5)
FTSE 250 4732.2 (+34.1)
FTSE 350 2455.3 (+41.8)
FTSE 1000 1254.7 (+24.7)
FTSE All-Share 2394.74 (+38.67)
FTSE Non Financials 2407.02 (+37.42)
FTSE Financials 1351.15 (+40.23)
FTSE Govt 102.14 (+0.23)
Bargains 3040
S&P Volume 512.8m
Nasdaq 1457.46 (+10.04)
German Mark 2.0883 (+0.0007)
Exchange Index 105.6 (+0.8)
Bank of England official rate (4pm) 7.50%
ESDE 1.2300
RPI 159.6 Nov (1.7%) Jan 1997-100
RPIX 158.0 Nov (2.9%) Jan 1997-100

Abbey Nat Dublin II 93.4
Autologic 271
BCO Technologies 166
Bonstead 199
Bovis Homes 194
Comland Comm 59
Energis 283
Fing Gearing Units 4180
General Inds 35
Gooch & Housego 133
Manchester & Lon 270
Marchpole 106
Market Link Publ 55
Northern Rertm 145
Opportunity 144
Property Asset 7
Rapid Cooker 94
Rapid Technology 64
Razorbak Vehicles 102
SCS Upholstery 109
Schaal & East 109
Second Scot Nat 99
Syner 232
Tetra 176
Vanguard Med Wts 45

Bodycote n/p (500) 374.1
Taylor Niss n/p (60) 204

RISER:
Sun Life & P 445p (+28p)
Blooms Int 485p (+30p)
GRE 332p (+17p)
Royals 316p (+16p)
Legal & Gen 510p (+25p)
Shagoch 841p (+32p)
Bank Scotland 570p (+20p)
Rentokil Int 267p (+13p)
Maris Spencer 610p (+29p)
Tesco 507p (+25p)
Carlton Comm 470p (+20p)

FALLS:
Select App 565p (-33p)
Elsevier 971p (-8p)
Centab Pharm 607p (-12p)

Closing Prices Page 25

The chips are down

THE Japanese are not just thinking the unthinkable, they are beginning to do it, and that could give a nasty shock to some British companies. After years of spending and growing, the big Japanese makers of semiconductors may be about to shrink. Reports from Tokyo suggest that NEC, Toshiba and Fujitsu are cutting investment and shrinking production in an effort to become more efficient and cope with a sluggish chip market.

Prices of chips have been on the slide and Japanese manufacturers have been shifting production offshore but signs that the domestic economy is now in full-scale recession bode ill for consumption of personal computers, mobile phones and other products that use semiconductors. That means reduced investment and leaner times for suppliers.

Companies such as BOC, Cookson, and

Johnson Matthey could feel the aftershocks from a slowdown. Edwards - BOC's vacuum technology business - supplies equipment for semiconductor manufacturers and has plants in Korea and Japan. A slowdown in spending by the big chip-makers will hurt BOC's operations. Cookson's electronic material division supplies products used in circuit board and semiconductor manufacture. Likewise, Johnson Matthey which is investing heavily in a new US facility for the production of a new laminate packaging for semiconductors. Johnson Matthey has a close tie-up with Intel, the US semiconductor maker but a slowdown in the Far East could have unforeseen ramifications for overseas competitors as Asian producers use their currency advantage to flood Europe and American with cheap products. A sector to avoid.

Railtrack

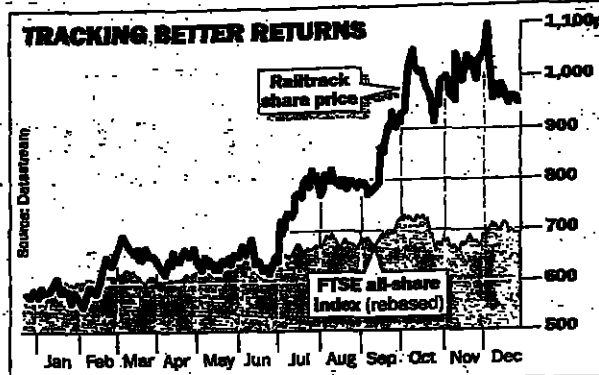
LAST month Railtrack's regulator reminded us why this railway share has done better than its Victorian forebears. Railtrack did not need to build its network, hence the regulator's implicit threat that utility-type rates of return could be imposed on the company. The share price slumped as investors took fright at the prospect of Office-style regulation.

The reaction is overdone and Railtrack's plans to invest more than £200 million in a new freight line linking Scotland with the Channel Tunnel are part of the reason why. Speculative investment in rail infrastructure - something the Government wishes to encourage - is hardly low risk, not the sort of thing that one would undertake for a mere 6-8 per cent return. Logically Railtrack should be

allowed a better average return, or much increased returns for additions to the infrastructure.

The precedent is the gentle regulatory review of BAA during its investment in Terminal 5 but BAA can confidently predict traffic growth at double the rate of economic growth while no one can be certain that recent growth

in rail traffic will continue. The wild card is the coming transport White Paper. Punitive taxes on road users could give Railtrack a growing revenue base but such measures are unlikely and would be a punitive regulatory regime. Railtrack should do well next year and has more opportunities than its airport cousin.



Flotations

NEW issues love bull markets and if fewer small companies are heading for a quiet year then there is no mystery why that should be the case. However, eyes alone cannot explain why flotation sponsors are worried. Most fund managers ignore companies capitalised at less than £150 million and a quick glance at the relevant indices explains why. Small companies massively underperformed the market. On a purely mechanistic view, bigger is always better.

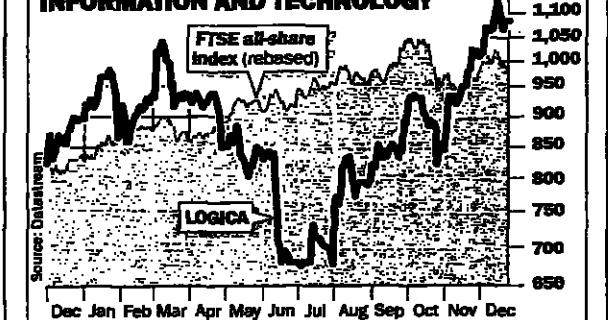
Fund managers are also influenced by economies of scale - it takes an awful lot of small companies to provide a home for a billion - and the security afforded by the liquidity of international company shares. Meanwhile, venture capitalists offer a quick and increasingly cheap source of finance to small company owners looking for new working capital or a profitable exit.

The dearth of small company floats could well get worse. The MMC is investigating the underwriting market and the logical consequence is higher costs for the small fry. Merchant banks and brokers will be forced to abandon the practice of overcharging big companies to subsidise the weak. Nevertheless it would be wrong to be too sentimental. Most small companies are deserving small. They are rotten investments because of their weak managements, small markets and bad financial controls. They should be left to venture capitalists who can nurse them to sturdier health and eventually float them as more substantial companies.

Goldsmiths is promising jam tomorrow and plans to double in size in the next five years, though no one in the City expected much improvement soon. But figures yesterday suggest that the jam is starting to trickle through. Pre-Christmas like-for-like sales have jumped 8 per cent and in spite of the Rolex price increases, margins are holding steady. Moreover, it is making fast progress with its expansion plan and will add 20 stores to its 130-strong chain next year alone.

Yesterday's share price rise seems scant reward for such steady progress. At 13 times forecast earnings, the shares are now placed for a convincing recovery in 1998.

EDITED BY CARL MORTISTHED

FUND MANAGERS IN SEARCH OF
INFORMATION AND TECHNOLOGY

FRIDAY sees the creation of a new sector within the FT All-Share index. The information and technology sector will cater for the high-tech companies that have mushroomed in recent years. Calculation of the new sector starts on Friday.

A number of companies have already begun enjoying something of a rerating and others were being chased higher by buyers yesterday as the institutions set about the task of adjusting their weightings.

Logica led the way with a rise of 17.5p to £10.90,

having already attracted "buy" recommendations from several leading brokers. Nomura, the Japanese securities house, has set a target price of £15 and its rival, SBC Warburg Dillon Reed, says the shares are a buy up to £12.80. Others to go better included London Bridge Securities, 23p to 514.5p, MMT Computing, 15p to 840p, Micro Focus, 15p to £23.40, Missy, 22.5p to £17.95, Royalalloy, 16p to 315p, Sherwood International, 20p to 485p, Cadcentre, 20p to 325p, and Diagonal, 22.5p to 680p.

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Pub parade: an O'Neill's outlet, left; Richard Pennycook, Tim Martin, John Hutson of JD Wetherspoon, top; Guy Hands of Nomura, below left; lager boom: and entrepreneur Roger Myers



Dog & Duck heads for oblivion in an era of branded beer outlets

Dominic Walsh and Andrew Sangster on the entrepreneurs who are at the forefront of a £1.2bn pub retailing revolution

The pub industry is undergoing a dramatic transformation. On current industry estimates, next year the big operators will pour £1.5 billion into the pubs they run as they rush to exploit the returns available from converting traditional outlets into branded concepts.

The most visible of these new-look pubs have been the much-maligned ersatz Irish pubs. With the wave of a shamrock, the Dog and Duck is transformed into an O'Neill's, a Scruffy Murphy's or one of the myriad other copycat concepts. Bass has become the biggest Irish operator with its O'Neill's, rolled out in conjunction with its Caffrey's Irish Beer, one of the most successful beer launches in recent years.

Next year's country of choice looks set to be Australia, with such monikers as Bar Oz due for wider exposure. Scottish & Newcastle, which is behind the Bar Oz concept, is hoping to tap into the resurgence of interest in the southern hemisphere expected to follow from the staging of the Olympics in Sydney in 2000. S&N is also hoping the spread of Australian pub brands will do for Foster's, the Australian beer it brews under licence, what Irish pubs have done for Caffrey's.

The interest in managed pubs is a by-product of the retailing revolution that has swept through the country's 70,000-plus licensed outlets. At the end of the last decade most brewers viewed pubs as just an outlet for beer. Pubs were seen in the boardrooms as a necessary evil in the more important game of shifting as many barrels as possible.

Today, however, all the big brewers have divided their operations into production and retailing divisions. Indeed some, such as Greenalls, have opted out of brewing altogether, and there have been persistent whispers that Whitbread may follow suit.

It is widely held that this transformation was caused by government intervention. The Monopolies and Mergers Commission report into the supply of beer in 1989 condemned the vertical integration in the industry, whereby most brewers also owned the outlets for their beer.

Lord Young of Graftonham, then Secretary of State at the Department of Trade and Industry, acted on the MMC's findings by forcing the big brewers to free half of all their pubs above a 2,000 ceiling from the tie under which landlords were obliged to sell beer supplied by the parent. Effectively, the brewers were forced to shed thousands of pubs in response to the Beer Orders from the DTI.

A raft of new companies sprang up to run the pubs that were being unloaded. These new kids on the block took a fresh look at the industry and, with no brewery to keep happy, launched into pub retailing. Several, such as Regent Inns and Grosvenor Inns, have subsequently floated on the stock market and have tended to command premium multiples.

But Tim Martin, the founder of JD Wetherspoon, one of the most successful pub chains, disputes this view of things. "The MMC was not the catalyst for change. What really mattered was that people were able to get new licences," he claims.

He has a point. Wetherspoon, except at the outset in the early 1990s, has never bought an existing pub, preferring to convert old car showrooms and schools into superpubs. "We started opening new pubs, which forced the industry to reinvent," says Martin. "All the MMC did

was reduce the number of big brewers from six to three."

In effect, the driver for change has been an increasing understanding of who is going to pubs and what they want. The shrinking manual workforce of thirsty blue-collar males has seen beer volumes shrink dramatically during the 1990s, with the emphasis moving from ales to lagers.

A new market was needed and so the industry turned its attention to women and families, with food rather than beer becoming the focus for most of the new pubs. At Wetherspoon about a third of the takings in its new outlets are food. In 1990, just 4 per cent of the chain's turnover was food.

Many of the brewers realised that the new climate required skills they did not possess. Bass, for example, turned in 1994 to outside

consultant Amanda Wilmoth to help develop the All Bar One concept, which looks nothing like a conventional pub. They are light, airy venues where the emphasis is on food and wine. These so-called female-friendly characteristics are designed to make the pubs accessible to everybody. The reality, admits Wilmoth, is more prosaic.

The city centre All Bar One units are most likely to be filled with male suits. "We tapped into a huge demand, which was always there: a group of people with a high disposable income much more concerned about standards," she explains.

The next generation of pubgoers will be even more demanding, she believes, as they have grown up in an environment where eating out has become the norm rather than the exception. Whether male

or female, the future customer will not accept the smoky, claustrophobic atmosphere of a traditional boozery.

Her latest venture is with Yates Brothers Wine Lodges, a century-old company that has transformed itself into one of the managed pub pioneers. Yates, under Wilmoth's supervision, will open the first Hal Bar & Canteen in Bristol in February, which will be followed later in the year by two sites in London. Open-plan kitchens visible to the customer, plus the sale of a range of own-branded goods such as mustards and oils, will be the key features of the new chain. "The industry has a lot to learn. We are still building pubs without air-conditioning and yet every car my friends buy has air-conditioning," she says.

While the revolution in pubs is arguably good news for consumer choice, investors will be looking harder at whether an adequate return can be made on the money being ploughed in. To date the returns have been good, on the whole, with the best operators achieving at least 20 to 25 per cent. Bass estimates that its return on capital from converting an unbranded pub to an O'Neill's is more than 50 per cent on average.

But as more and more of the big companies' managed estates are converted to brands there is clearly the prospect of diminishing returns, and Whitbread is the most likely to suffer first. It has led the charge into pub retailing and more than half of its managed pubs are branded, a higher proportion than any of the other big players. Bass and S&N, on the other hand, are likely to benefit from being laggards in the rush to brand-

ing. Less than a fifth of the Bass estate, and around a quarter of S&N's managed pubs, are branded.

Inevitably, the massive sums being pumped into managed houses by the big brewers has put a question mark over the future of their slower-growing tenanted estates, particularly in the wake of the loosening of the beer tie in recent years. It was no surprise when Bass recently called time on the bulk of its tenanted pubs, selling more than 1,400 for £563.7 million.

The new owners are a financial consortium fronted by Hugh Osmond and Roger Myers, who made their names with PizzaExpress and Café Rouge respectively. Their view is that many of the disciplines and skills brought to bear on managed houses can be applied to tenancies without having to resort to the huge amounts of investment being thrown at managed-house operations.

Of even greater significance has been the appetite for tenancies shown by Nomura International, part of the Japanese securities giant. Having bought 1,700 pubs from Intreprenor in 1995, Nomura, whose managing director is Guy Hands, forked out £1.2 billion in September for Intreprenor's remaining 4,300 pubs and was the under-bidder for the Bass estate. It believes that tenanted operations are undermanaged assets that have been starved of investment. And yet, it argues, they provide a solid property cashflow, enabling it to parcel up the debt in the form of property-backed securities.

The jury is still out on whether Nomura has paid too much, but the fact remains that it is now Britain's biggest landlord — a by-product of the Beer Orders that Lord Young and the MMC can surely never have foreseen.



Lord Young's response forced big brewers to shed pubs

The time for navel-gazing is truly over

I have been a year most marketers would rather forget. After endless conferences and seminars debating the role of marketing the industry arrived at the most unsatisfactory conclusion: marketing is the understanding of the customers' needs. Not much change there, I hear you say. For an industry that prides itself on the ability to read its customers' minds it is singularly inept at self-analysis.

However, after years of getting bashed about in the boardroom the industry decided to take a good look in the mirror. See if it was in healthy enough shape to take on the challenges that lie ahead.

And, now that marketers understand who they are and what they are meant to be doing they are determined to ensure 1998 is the year in which they finally convince their paymasters of their true value. And, given the very nature of their job, marketers should be the most adept at promoting their own cause.

John Stubbs, chief executive of The Marketing Council, the industry think-tank, says the time has come for marketers to call a halt to the navel-gazing and start proving their worth.

"Most marketers are sitting inside their marketing departments worrying about the acceptability of marketing," he says. "What they need to do is identify the really successful operations out there and try to find some benchmarks for them."

The struggle facing marketers is not only in getting colleagues to understand what their role in the company is, but also what the marketing department's aims are in the coming year. In short, to get everyone singing from the same hymn sheet.

Stephen Robertson, chairman of the Marketing Society and marketing director at B&Q, the DIY chain, says: "Marketing is becoming more important; it's become a process; it's no longer just a name about the door."

"However, we've got to make sure that the whole of the business understands what the customer is thinking. It's about informing the business and not just the marketing department."

It is a familiar theme to marketing departments in a variety of business sectors. Not least in the world of computers and business systems.

Keith Westcott, group marketing director at ICL, came to the United Kingdom after working in marketing in America. He says UK companies, including his own, still regard marketing with suspicion.

"For a long time marketing has been a dirty word," he laments. "The board sees marketing as the people who only spend money and

never those who contribute to the bottom line."

But he adds: "In order to gain their confidence we have to learn how to present our ideas to the board and back them up with numbers. Without that we don't have a great deal of credibility."

Yet, while marketers ponder their role, the business world around is changing at such a rapid pace that marketers are finding it harder to predict what their customers want and therefore plan ahead.

Aside from the usual suspects that appear on every marketer's worry list — media inflation, restrictive legislation, cost control — there are signs that a more perturbing trend is emerging: a genuine lack of control.

Bob Sinclair, marketing director of the Automobile Association, speaks for the majority of service-driven companies tempted by the attractions of diversification into new areas when he says: "There are so many distractions. We're trying to figure out ways in which we can retain the loyalty of our customers. Do we do that by diversifying into new areas or do we stick to what we have always done better but only try to do it better. There is a danger of diversification just for the sake of it."

For Paul Wood, managing director of Spode, the bone china manufacturer, it is the ever-changing taste of the consumer that is forcing his company to move away from a mass-produced product to individual lines. Trying to predict what consumers want and therefore what his retail customer will be demanding is becoming increasingly difficult. He says: "You have to latch on to the trends very fast. If you don't, you could be marketing at the wrong time."

Fear of the unknown can curtail the initial excitement that new opportunities such as technology and new media present to the marketing community.

Chris Turner, marketing director of the Discovery cable channel, views the advent of new cable channels with a healthy dose of circumspection not least because they present a threat to his company's position.

"I think the challenge to many marketers will be in trying to tackle new media and understanding what it means for their company. Does it mean further fragmentation of the consumer or does it in fact mean better segmentation?"

One thing is certain, however. Come midnight tomorrow the whoops of joy that greet the new year will also be there to wish good riddance to the old one.

JULIAN LEE

Ritz cracker

A TRICKY problem for Mohamed Al Fayed, 1998 is the 100th anniversary of the foundation of the Ritz Hotel in Paris by Carl Ritz. His mission was "to offer guests all the refinements a prince would wish for in his own residence". The centenary would normally lend itself to an ostentatious publicity campaign — except that the Paris Ritz, following the tragic death of Diana, Princess of Wales, has had enough publicity for a while, some might think. The inquiries should be over by the late spring, so unleashing the inevitable legal actions. Boasting over the

comforts and splendid service on offer at the hotel might clash with some of the headlines this summer. Alas, however busy it may be on the trading floor at Harrods, most of the rest of Al Fayed's organisation seems to have come down with the same mysterious virus that has felled 98 per cent of the working population this week. "We won't be making any comment until Monday," says one of the few survivors.

I HEAR that George Robertson, our tough-minded Scottish Defence Secretary, received a memo from one of his civil servants explaining the holiday arrangements for the red box this year, the pile of documents that ministers have to take home to work on. The red box would be arriving on December 31, and its contents would need to be processed by January 2. The civil servant in question was swiftly put straight as to Robertson's own holiday arrangements this Hogmanay.

Bank error

ANY expert on advertising, if that is not an oxymoron, will tell you that "knocking copy", ads that attack the competition, can rebound badly — look at the bloody battle a few years



ago between rival lawnmower makers. But the latest TV campaign from First Direct starting on New Year's Day looks suspiciously close to knocking copy, featuring Bob Mortimer, a comedian, attempting to make people pay for things they would normally do for free, such as wear a side-parting in their hair.

No, I didn't think it sounded very funny, either. But it is a direct attack on all those banks that charge for their services, and to make sure I do not miss the point, First Direct has spelt out just how much most of them charge. Oddly enough, the only ones offering a free service are First Direct and Midland, which happens to be First Direct's parent. Can we look forward, therefore, to an all-out advertising war between the banks? "My

foyer's got more marble in it than yours", perhaps? Or "our secretaries can come up with a sillier spelling of your name than theirs?"

SOME analysts seriously question whether Allied Domecq can expect to exit 1998 as an independent company. They say the group's survival depends on a mega-merger or distribution deal with another big drinks company to resist the merged Guinness and Grand Metropolitan whose new name I am pledged not to make fun of again until at least the day after tomorrow. (Some analysts seriously questioned whether Allied Domecq could expect to exit 1997 as an independent company, but that is another story.) The first such deal has now emerged, a joint venture with a Finnish vodka maker to supply Poland. With, ooh, 1 per cent of the admittedly huge Polish vodka market and a mission to turn them on to Allied's Domecq whisky. A good start, but rather more needed, I fear.

Gloves off

IN A few days' time, assuming they have been playing by the rules, the team now gathered around Nicola Horlick and John Richards at Société Générale Asset Management will be allowed to pick up the phone and start poaching former clients. Mergers and job losses, the Asian flu, and now a new and soundly backed fund manager snapping at their heels —

curious how few City folk have bothered to come into work this week, is it not? In any event clearance by Imro, the financial regulator, of the SocGen team is just days away.

Yesterday the signing of two more fund managers was announced. John Ions will be head of retail and Mikkel Bates in charge of unit trust services. Both, oddly enough, were poached from Aberdeen Prolific, Ions having been in charge of integrating the two businesses of Aberdeen Asset Management and Prolific since the merger was announced in July. They bring the number of fund managers to 11. I am told there will be more before the official launch on January 20.

MARTIN WALLER



Nicola Horlick awaits the regulator

BUSINESS LETTERS

Chancellor and national insurance

From Mr David Lindsay
Sir, Gordon Brown was right not to rule out increasing national insurance contributions ("Brown stirs up talk of increase in national insurance", *Weekend Money*, December 20). It is not a tax, but a contribution out of earnings to a fund from which contributory benefits, such as the state pension, are paid. There is currently a top limit of annual earnings that bear this contribution, and clearly no Chancellor would have invented a "tax" solely for earned income, and then only on a lower band of that income! Obviously Mr Brown wants to keep open the possibility of improving contributory bene-

fits. My guess is that he and Ms Harman want to reform the basic state pension, making it fairer between men and women with the same NI record, and with payment starting within a range of ages that reflects actual retirement practice (as Beveridge intended), not five or more years after most people have retired. Abolition of the upper earnings limit would enable a very substantial start to be made in reducing male state pension age for the basic pension. Yours faithfully, DAVID LINDSAY, 36 Orchard Coombe, Whitechapel Hill, Reading, Berkshire.

Chief's candid quote

From Mr Roy Jenkins
Sir, What does Mr Martin St Quinton, chief executive of Danka, think he is up to, claiming (Report, December 17) that unsatisfactory results are "our own fault. We've not made the right management decisions and we have not implemented them fast enough". What about the strong pound, state intervention, the

price of oil, trade unions, daft EU decisions, kids in red braces not knowing their apex from their elbow, shareholders, and so on? It will not do for chief executives to admit publicly that they got it wrong. Mr St Quinton deserves to get thrown out of the club. Yours unbelievably, ROY JENKINSON, 22 Grange Avenue, Exmouth, Devon.



...the

[illegible]

Shares close at best of day

TRADING PERIOD: Settlement takes place five business days after the day of trade. Changes are calculated on the previous day's close, but adjustments are made when a stock is ex-dividend. Changes, yields and price/earnings ratios are based on middle prices.

[illegible]

1987				1987			
1987	Low Company	Price	% PE	1987	Low Company	Price	% PE
1239	387	1180	85	13	712	521	17
1240	387	1180	85	13	712	521	17
1241	387	1180	85	13	712	521	17
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1419	387	1					

1997 Low Company Price Bid % PE	1997 Low Company Price Bid % PE	1997 Low Company Price Bid % PE	1997 Low Company Price Bid % PE
1997 Low Company Price Bid % PE		1997 Low Company Price Bid % PE	
201	330	24.00	22.40
202	330	24.00	22.40
203	330	24.00	22.40
204	330	24.00	22.40
205	330	24.00	22.40
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Guide to the best and worst ITF players...

So you thought you had done badly in ITF? Cheer yourself up with this Nightmare Team of the season

Hope for some seasonal peace, love and understanding from those mentioned, we have selected the opposite of a Dream Team - the Nightmare XI: the players and manager who, put together in one sorry squad, would guarantee you the wooden spoon at the bottom of the entire Interactive Team Football league.

Not, you understand, that these are downright bad players. Although, in the interests of some degree of fairness, we have not selected injured players who have missed the entire season so far (Alan Shearer being the obvious example) some have, admittedly, played only a few games and have, consequently, accrued only a few points.

Robbie Slater, the Australia international, for instance, was unlucky enough to be the odd man out when Dave Jones, the Southampton manager, finally settled on his best team, and has consigned himself with several weeks in the hot sun playing for his country in the Confederation Cup. Jose Dominguez, the Tottenham winger, a latecomer to the lists, has enjoyed some magic moments; Harry Kewell, too, is well-thought-of - but the statistics do not lie. Patrick Blondeau, voted the best defender in France last season, suffered several heavy defeats in the traumatic early weeks of Sheffield Wednesday's season.



and has been invisible since Ron Atkinson took over. Other players have played consistently but in struggling teams, where fine individual performances have been lost in the general confusion.

NIGHTMARE XI

Goalkeeper	Cost (£m)	Weeks	Total
D Watson (Barnsley)	2.00	8	-24
Full backs			
P Blondeau (Sheff Wed)	1.50	2	-15
J Edinburgh (Spurs)	1.00	1	-9
Central defenders			
A Moses (Barnsley)	1.00	1	-19
B O'Neill (Aberdeen)	2.00	5	-17
Attackers			
S Hughes (Aston Villa)	1.00	1	3
M Johansen (Bolton)	1.00	1	5
R Slater (Southampton)	1.00	1	8
J O'Shea (Everton)	1.00	1	6
Strikers			
J Dominguez (Spurs)	1.00	1	0
H Kewell (Leeds)	1.00	1	0
Manager			
J Duffy (Hibernian)	1.00	1	0

Defenders and goalkeepers hold a distinct advantage over midfield players and forwards in this type of exercise, in that they are able to score large numbers of minus points with relative ease. Short of missing a penalty, scoring an own goal and receiving a red card in the same game several times a season, the average forward would have trouble achieving an overall minus. Not that some have not tried.

Predictably, Barnsley and Hibernian, the two teams at the bottom of the two premier leagues, are represented, although the weighting in favour of the Yorkshire club is slightly artificial in that more Barnsley players are listed. Keen-eyed observers of the ITF player lists have already commented that both Hibernian and the team they recently replaced at the bottom of the Scottish premier league, Aberdeen, have done miraculously well considering that they appear to have no full backs and only two central defenders between them.

Where two candidates are equal in terms of their points total, the player who has proved to be a bigger waste of your money has been chosen. The rules about not selecting more than two representatives from one club have been scrupulously observed in the interests of fairness. To Barnsley.

ITF helpline: 01582 707270



Clockwise from top left: Watson (-24); Blondeau (-15); Slater (6); Dominguez (0)



ADD

52804 Jürgen Klinsmann Tottenham Hotspur 55.0m

HOW TO MAKE A TRANSFER

YOU MAY transfer as and when you wish according to your team transfer allowance. If a player or manager moves teams during the season, it may affect the composition of your team. You may adjust your team by using the transfer system to avoid missing out on points.

EACH TEAM that was entered at the start of the season was allocated 60 transfers for the season and each team registering after that date had its number of transfers reduced by three per week up to December 13. Teams registered before noon that day were allocated an extra 20 transfers. Teams registered since then and from now on will be allocated 20 transfers for the rest of the season.

THE LINE is open now and will remain open for the rest of the season. You may only make transfers by using a Touch-tone (DTMF) telephone (most push-button telephones with a * and a hash key are Touch-tone). You will need ten digits for your PIN, which you will have to tap in (not speak). Follow the simple instructions and tap in the five-digit codes of the players that you are transferring.

YOU MAY make up to four transfers per call but may make as many calls as you wish to achieve the required amount of transfers.

TRANSFERS made before 12 noon on any day will become effective for matches starting after that time. Transfers made after 12 noon will become effective for matches starting after 12 noon the following day.

YOUR NEW player only starts to score points for you when his transfer is registered. The current score of the player transferred out remains part of your team score but he then ceases to score for you.

CALLS COST 50p per minute and calls from a telephone box cost approximately twice as much.

Transfer number: 0891 884 628.
Outside the UK: +44 990 200 538.

Code	Name	Team	Cost (£m)	Weeks	Total
10101	J Leighton	Aberdeen	2.00	8	-1
10201	D Seaman	Arsenal	5.00	5	57
10301	M Bosnich	Aston Villa	3.00	5	41
10401	D Watson	Barnsley	1.00	10	-24
10501	T Flowers	Blackburn R	3.50	-3	46
10601	K Branagan	Bolton W	1.50	0	38
10701	S Kerr	Celtic	4.00	0	0
10702	J Gould	Celtic	3.50	2	40
10801	E De Geoy	Chelsea	3.00	2	65
10901	S Gvozdenovic	Coventry City	1.50	0	17
11001	C Nash	Crystal Palace	0.25	0	0
11002	K Miller	Crystal Palace	2.00	-1	30
11101	M Poom	Derby County	1.50	10	50
11201	S Dykstra	Dundee United	2.00	-9	12
11301	I Westwater	Dunfermline	1.00	-3	6
11401	N Southall	Everton	2.00	0	3
11501	G Rousset	Hearts	3.50	3	47
11601	C Reid	Hibernian	1.50	2	-7
11602	O Gotschalksson	Hibernian	1.50	0	4
11701	D Lekovic	Kilmarnock	1.00	8	14
11801	N Martyn	Leeds United	3.50	0	64
11901	K Keller	Leicester City	3.00	-1	50
12001	D James	Liverpool	3.50	6	62
12101	P Schmeichel	Manchester Utd	5.00	0	90
12201	S Howie	Motherwell	1.00	0	0
12301	S Given	Newcastle Utd	3.00	0	17
12401	A Goram	Rangers	5.00	0	29
12501	K Pressman	Sheffield Wed	2.00	9	-2
12702	P Jones	Southampton	1.00	3	5
12801	A Main	St Johnstone	0.50	8	28
12801	I Walker	Tottenham H	2.50	-5	19
12901	L Mladoski	West Ham Utd	2.00	0	0
13001	N Sullivan	Wimbledon	2.50	-1	50

Code	Name	Team	Cost (£m)	Weeks	Total
20201	L Dixon	Arsenal	3.00	1	13
20202	N Winterburn	Arsenal	3.00	0	27
20203	S Pettit	Arsenal	3.50	0	15
20301	S Staunton	Aston Villa	2.50	0	14
20302	A Wright	Aston Villa	2.50	1	17
20303	S Grayson	Aston Villa	2.00	1	18
20304	F Nelson	Aston Villa	2.00	1	9
20401	N Eaden	Barnsley	0.50	5	-3
20402	N Thompson	Barnsley	0.50	0	-5
20403	D Barnard	Barnsley	1.00	5	-2
20502	J Kenna	Blackburn R	3.00	3	35
20503	P Valery	Blackburn R	2.50	0	8
20504	N Cox	Bolton W	1.50	-2	1
21001	M Whitlow	Bolton W	2.00	0	4
21002	R Elliott	Bolton W	2.00	0	4
21003	J Phillips	Bolton W	1.00	0	-4
21004	T Boyd	Celtic	3.50	0	45
21005	T McKenlay	Celtic	3.50	0	2
21006	J McNamara	Celtic	3.00	-1	45
21007	G Le Saux	Chelsea	4.00	0	27
21008	D Petrescu	Chelsea	4.00	0	49
21009	D Babayaro	Chelsea	2.00	0	13
21010	F Sinclair	Chelsea	2.00	0	10
21011	D Burrows	Coventry City	1.00	0	-1
21012	M Hall	Coventry City	1.00	-1	8
21013	R Nilsson	Coventry City	1.00	0	-1
21014	D Gordon	Crystal Palace	1.50	-1	16
21015	M Edworthy	Crystal Palace	1.50	0	2
21016	J Smith	Crystal Palace	1.50	-1	-2
21017	C Powell	Derby County	1.50	5	25
21018	D Yates	Derby County	1.00	4	5
21019	G Rowett	Derby County	1.50	4	12
21020	A Hinchcliffe	Everton	2.50	-1	5
21021	E Barrett	Everton	1.50	-1	4
21022	T Phelan	Everton	1.50	0	-1
21023	M Ward	Everton	1.50	0	5
21024	G Locke	Hearts	1.50	0	8
21025	I Kerr	Kilmarnock	1.00	4	13
21026	G Kelly	Leeds Utd	2.50	-2	21
21027	D Robertson	Leeds Utd	2.50	-2	23
21028	S Guppy	Leicester City	2.50	3	36
21029	S Bjornby	Liverpool	3.00	0	21
21030	J McAner	Liverpool	3.00	2	15
21031	R Jones	Liverpool	3.00	0	11
21032	D Irwin	Manchester Utd	4.00	0	20
21033	G Neville	Manchester Utd	3.50	2	46
21034	P Neville	Manchester Utd	3.50	5	38
21035	S Watson	Newcastle Utd	3.00	3	20
21036	W Barton	Newcastle Utd	2.00	-1	13
21037	J Beresford	Newcastle Utd	2.00	-2	14
21038	S Pearce	Newcastle Utd	3.00	-2	7
21039	A Cleland	Rangers	3.00	5	25
21040	S Stensaa	Rangers	3.00	1	26
21041	P Blondeau	Sheffield Wed	2.00	0	-15
21042	I Nolan	Sheffield Wed	2.00	3	-8
21043	J Dodd	Southampton	1.50	-1	12
21044	F Benall	Southampton	0.75	-1	4
21045	S Charlton	Southampton	0.75	0	2
21046	C Wilson	Tottenham H	2.00	-2	2
21047	J Edinburgh	Tottenham H	2.00	0	-9
21048	S Carr	Tottenham H	2.00	-3	-3
21049	J Dicks	West Ham Utd	3.00	0	0
21050	A Impy	West Ham Utd	1.50	6	1
21051	T Breacker	West Ham Utd	2.00	1	5
21052	B Thacker	Wimbledon	2.00	-4	13
21053	K Cunningham	Wimbledon	2.00	-1	12
21054	A Kimble	Wimbledon	2.00	-3	3

Code	Name	Team	Cost (£m)	Weeks	Total
30101	B O'Neill	Aberdeen	2.00	5	-17
30201	T Adams	Arsenal	3.00	0	13
30202	M Keown	Arsenal	3.00	0	2
30203	G Grimandi	Arsenal	2.00	0	14
30204	S Boud	Arsenal	3.00	0	11
30301	G Southgate	Aston Villa	3.00	0	11
30302	U Ehiogu	Aston Villa	3.00	0	23
30401	A De Zeeuw	Barnsley	1.00	-16	-16
30402	A Moses	Barnsley	0.50	4	-19
30403	M Appleby	Barnsley	0.50	0	0
30502	C Hendry	Blackburn R	3.00	4	32
30504	S Henschow	Blackburn R	2.50	3	24
30505	T Pedersen	Blackburn R	2.00	0	2
30601	G Taggart	Bolton W	1.50	0	5
30602	G Bergsson	Bolton W	1.00	4	16
30603	C Fairclough	Bolton W	1.00	-2	-5
30604	M Fish	Bolton W	1.50	-2	11
30701	E Annoni	Celtic	1.50	0	12
30702	M Mackay	Celtic	3.00	0	2
30703	A Stubbie	Celtic	3.00	-1	43
30704	M Rieper	Celtic	3.00	0	29
30801	F Labouef	Chelsea	3.00	0	39
30802	M Duberry	Chelsea	3.00	0	24
30803	S Clarke	Chelsea	2.50	0	-14
30804	B Lambourde	Chelsea	2.50	0	1
30901	L Dashi	Coventry City	1.50	0	0
30902	R Shaw	Coventry City	1.50	0	13
30903	P Williams	Coventry City	1.50	0	-5
31001	A Roberts	Crystal Palace	1.50	-1	14
31002	A Linighan	Crystal Palace	0.75	-2	8
31003	D Tuttle	Crystal Palace	0.75	0	0
31004	H Hjeltness	Crystal Palace	1.00	-1	0
31101	I Stinas	Derby County	2.50	5	18
31102	J Laurson	Derby County	1.50	2	14
31201	S Pressley	Dundee Utd	2.00	-3	14
31301	G Shields	Dunfermline	1.50	-2	-3
31401	S Blic	Everton	2.50	0	-18
31402	D Watson	Everton	2.00	-1	14
31404	C Tiler	Everton	1.50	-2	10
31501	D Weir	Hearts	2.00	1	26
31601	J Hughes	Hibernian	2.00	0	-13
31801	D Wetherall	Leeds Utd	2.50	-2	33
31802	G Harte	Leeds Utd	2.00	0	22
31803	R McManis	Leeds Utd	2.00	-2	12
31804	L Radclife	Leeds Utd	2.00	0	15
31901	M Elliott	Leicester City	3.50	-2	44
31902	P Karmark	Leicester City	2.00	-1	30
31903	S Walsh	Leicester City	2.50	-2	31
31904	S Prior	Leicester City	2.00	-1	6
32001	M Wright	Liverpool	3.00	0	2
32002	D Matteo	Liverpool	3.00	2	23
32003	B Kvarme	Liverpool	3.00	2	32
32004	H Berg	Manchester Utd	3.50	6	33
32101	D May	Manchester Utd	3.50	0	4
32102	G Pallister	Manchester Utd	3.50	0	40
32201	P Albert	Newcastle Utd	2.50	0	9
32202	D Peacock	Newcastle Utd	3.00	0	6
32203	S Howey	Newcastle Utd	2.00	0	1
32304	A Platone	Newcastle Utd	3.00	-1	9
32401	S Ponnill	Rangers	3.50	0	29
32402	J Bjorklund	Rangers	3.50	0	29
32403	L Amoroso	Rangers	3.50	0	0
32404	R Gough	Sheffield Wed	2.00	0	5
32501	D Walker	Sheffield Wed	2.00	4	0
32502	J Newsome	Sheffield Wed	2.00	3	0
32503	P Atherton	Sheffield Wed	2.00	4	5
32701	R Dryden	Southampton	1.00	0	-5
32702	C Lundekvam	Southampton	1.00	-1	1
32704	K Monkou	Southampton	1.00	0	7
32801	S McCluskey	St Johnstone	0.50	5	10
32802	S Campbell	Tottenham H	2.50	0	2
32803	J Seales	Tottenham H	2.50	0	2
32804	R Vega	Tottenham H	2.00	0	3
32901	C Calderwood	Tottenham H	2.00	1	7
32902	R Ferdinand	West Ham Utd	2.50	6	6
32903	R Hall	West Ham Utd	2.00	0	0
31403	D Unsworth	West Ham Utd	2.00	6	-9
32904	S Potts	West Ham Utd	1.50	2	4
32905	P Pearce	West Ham Utd	2.00	6	0
33001	C Perry	Wimbledon	2.50	0	13
33002	D Blackwell	Wimbledon	2.50	-1	17

Code	Name	Team	Cost (£m)	Weeks	Total
40101	E Jess	Aberdeen	2.00	9	30
40102	P Bernard	Aberdeen	2.00	3	11
40201	M Overmars	Arsenal	5.50	3	45
40202	P Vieira	Arsenal	3.50	3	29
40203	S Hughes	Arsenal	2.00	0	3
40204	R Parfleur	Arsenal	2.50	6	38
40205	D Platt	Arsenal	1.50	5	24
40301	M Draper	Aston Villa	3.00	8	36
40302	J Taylor	Aston Villa	2.50	3	32
40401	N Redfearn	Barnsley	3.00	4	47
40402	E Tinker	Barnsley	2.00	4	24
40403	D Sheridan	Barnsley	1.00	4	18
40404	M Bullock	Barnsley	0.50	1	15
40501	J Wilcox	Blackburn R	3.00	0	26
40502	B McKinnis	Blackburn R	3.00	2	25
40503	T Sherwood	Blackburn R	3.00	3	38
40504	G Fitzroft	Blackburn R	3.00	1	26
40601	A Thompson	Bolton W	2.50	0	29
40602	S Sellers	Bolton W	2.00	5	24
40603	P Frandsen	Bolton W	2.00	2	30
40604	M Johansen	Bolton W	2.00	1	5

... and lessons to learn for the New Year

Have a good Christmas?

No thanks, I've already had one. Too good, as a matter of fact.

Ah, that accounts for the aspirin and the bicary eyes. You should see them from this side, man.

What did Santa bring you, then, apart from the obvious excess of alcoholic beverages?

Quite a few points in Interactive Team Football. I'm running nicely into form for the beginning of the FA Cup league.

So have you checked your position in the list?

Not yet. It's too depressing. Whenever I ring the information line, I've gone down a few hundred places, which can't be right when I've scored all those points.

Well, there are hundreds of thousands of other people playing apart from you, you know.

But surely the ones in the six-figure positions can't be doing that well, or they wouldn't be down there with me. A few points more or less can mean a difference of thousands of places. Who were your big Christmas successes?

Well, Steve Walsh scored from thirty yards at Highbury.

Pity it was at the wrong end.

Oh? I missed that. I must have been out of it on Boxing Day.

Who else?

I think my man Baiano of Derby scored from a penalty against someone.

It was Eranio, actually.

Oh, was it? I didn't do that well after all. I probably had steady rather than spectacular scorers.

At least now we can look forward to the FA Cup. Who did you pick up front in your cup team?

It had to be Hartson. If he can score against Premier League teams, he can score against me. I also took the controversial step of acquiring some Crystal Palace defenders.

What on earth for?

Tactics, comrade, tactics. I'm sure they won't win at home to Southampton, but I fancy a draw in that one, so I'll get an extra appearance out of each of them in the replay.

Goodness me. Anyone would think you've been reading the editorial on these pages and not just looking at the pictures. Any new resolutions, by the way?

Just one.

Which is?

Stop listening to your advice.

Exactly what I would have suggested.

More jumpers for Christmas; the FA Cup league starting this week; and a PFA team with only one direction to go in 1998 — up

The two full FA Carling Premiership programmes over the weekend have, as expected, enabled some ITF entrants to make spectacular rises up the list. Pride of place goes to Mr A. Kane, whose team, Hope United, earned 65 points: enough to take him up to 80,768th place from the relative depths of 126,178th. Hot on his heels was Mr A. Friar: his selection, Convincewithinte, moved from 133,654th to 92,315th — a jump of 41,339 places.

Don't forget — the FA Cup League begins on Saturday. Enter your team now!

One of the secrets of success for ITF team managers is careful husbandry of the £35 million transfer budget.

An over-cautious approach can, however, be taken too far. The Scrooge-like parsimony of Mike Whitlow, the Bolton Wanderers full-back, has resulted in his team, The No-Chancers, living up (or down) to their name: they are 59 points adrift at the foot of the PFA mini-league table.

Short of selecting Bob Cratchit at left-back and Tiny Tim in midfield, it is hard to see how the selection could less accurately reflect the big-spending spirit of Christmas.

The current value of Whitlow's team is only £17 million — less than half of the available starting kitty. Instead of splashing out on a Marco

Negri, buying Iain Dowie seems an eccentric move. And to select one Barnsley defender may be regarded as a misfortune — to select two looks like carelessness. Adrian Moses, one of his central defenders, even managed to spoil one of

HOW IS YOUR TEAM DOING?

Call the ITF Checkline on

0891 111 333

50p a minute, using a Touch-tone telephone. Public calls can twice as much

his better days, the 1-0 win over Derby County on Sunday, with a booking. Now have Dylan Kerr and John Hughes, the rest of his back four, covered themselves in festive glory.

Ironically, one of his cheapest acquisitions, Alan Main, the St Johnstone goalkeeper, has been one of his greatest successes, but it is the exception that proves the rule. Speculate to accumulate is clearly the message.

December prize-winners will be announced a fortnight today.



What did Mike Whitlow get for Christmas? Perhaps Santa brought him eleven new players for The No-Chancers

FAXBACK YOUR UP-TO-DATE TEAM SCORES

The brand new Times Faxback service provides you with a complete results sheet of your team, showing current and total scores, dates, times and details of transfers, as well as your position in the ITF League and, if appropriate, your mini-league (women's, students, youth). Scores and transfer confirmations are updated by 12 noon on the day following a match or matches.

Make sure you have your ten-digit PIN number ready when you call. To obtain an ITF Team Faxback, simply pick up the handset of the fax machine and dial the telephone number below. If your fax does not have a handset, attach a handset or press the on-hook or telephone button instead and dial the number below. Listen carefully to the instructions and press the appropriate buttons when asked. Calls cost £1.11 per minute and are available in the UK only.

The number to call for your Faxback is:

0991 111 333

If you have any problems operating this service, call the Faxback Helpline on 0171-412 3795. This service is provided by Telecom Express, Westminster Tower, London SE1 7SP.

LEAGUE TABLES

ITF LEAGUE
£250,000 top prize
£1,000 monthly prize

STUDENTS' LEAGUE
Monthly prize of
premiership tickets,
signed football and
sports bag

WOMEN'S LEAGUE
Monthly prize of premiership tickets, signed football and sports bag

YOUTH LEAGUE
Monthly prize of premiership tickets, signed football and sports bag

DAIRY CREST

WOMEN'S LEAGUE

STUDENTS' LEAGUE

YOUTH LEAGUE

ITF LEAGUE

STUDENTS' LEAGUE

YOUTH LEAGUE

ITF LEAGUE

STUDENTS' LEAGUE

YOUTH LEAGUE

ITF LEAGUE

STUDENTS' LEAGUE

YOUTH LEAGUE

ITF LEAGUE

STUDENTS' LEAGUE

YOUTH LEAGUE

ITF LEAGUE

1	Mr M Jones	717	Job	717
2	D Fenton	704	Out Of The Blue	704
3	Mr M Jones	696	Joe 4	696
4	Mike Madden	691	Goose 4	691
5	Malcolm Jackson	687	Poachers never change	687
6	D Shure	676	No Name	676
7	Mr M Jones	675	Don 2	675
8	B Pazzlerley	673	JLS	673
9	Mary Ann Kennedy	669	LFC 4	669
10	C Burt	664	Inverness United	664
11	P Turner	662	Rainbow Topham	662
12	A Luckhurst	658	Turners Earners 5	658
13	N Whalley	657	Tobs	657
14	Mr A Cokombe	655	H D G Is A Sad Waster	655
15	AJ Hastings	649	C Burr	649
16	D Shure	648	Mr Wads XI	648
17	A Luckhurst	645	Golden Wonders	645
18	Graeme Dabnor	645	Caroline B	645
19	P Turner	645	St Remy Strikers	645
20	P Turner	645	Turners Earners 5	645
21	P Turner	645	Chelsea 6	645
22	P Turner	645	Eastbrook Stars	645
23	P Turner	645	Nadar	645
24	P Turner	645	Too Farr	645
25	P Turner	645	Brantingham FC	645
26	P Turner	645	Yukon Merchants	645
27	P Turner	645	This Years Lot	645
28	P Turner	645	CLANG	645
29	P Turner	645	Genesis	645
30	P Turner	645	Turners Earners 6	645
31	P Turner	645	Drop Soldiers	645
32	P Turner	645	JLS	645
33	P Turner	645	John Hunt Tounion 7	645
34	P Turner	645	Liberts	645
35	P Turner	645	Goose 8	645
36	P Turner	645	T Turner	645
37	P Turner	645	Don 5	645
38	P Turner	645	Tobitt	645
39	P Turner	645	Angus's Boingers	645
40	P Turner	645	Chose 5	645
41	P Turner	645	Turners Earners 9	645
42	P Turner	645	Novel Spotters	645
43	P Turner	645	Barrie Papa a la Bacon	645
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96	P Turner	645	Barrie Papa a la Bacon	645
97	P Turner	645	Barrie Papa a la Bacon	645

PFA PLAYERS' LEAGUE

1	Paul Simpson	415	Derby County/Wolves	415
2	Simon Grayson	411	Aspen Villa	411
3	Al-Inge Hissland	405	Leeds United	405
4	John Selton	404	Conventry City	404
5	Steve Potts	404	West Ham United	404
6	Robert Lee	390	Newcastle United	390
7	David Tuttle	372	Crystal Palace	372
8	Rob Savage	372	Leicester City	372
9	Dean Blackwell	372	Wimbledon	372
10	Jonathan Hunt	366	Derby County	366
11	Richard Shaw	366	Conventry City	366
12	Kevin Gallacher	366	Blackburn Rovers	366
13	David Bony	352	Newcastle United	352
14	Kyle Lightbourne	352	Conventry City	352
15	Tim Brooker	345	West Ham United	345
16	Frank Keworth	345	Leeds United	345
17	Ben Keworth	345	Liverpool	345
18	Garth Southgate	334	Aspen Villa	334
19	Nigel Marryn	330	Leeds United	330
20	David Seaman	328	Wimbledon	328
21	Dave Watson	328	Everton	328
22	Phil Babb	327	Liverpool	327
23	Teddy Sheringham	327	Manchester United	327
24	Andy Townsend	322	Aspen Villa/Middlebrough	322
25	Nicklas Nerger	320	Chelsea	320
26	Dean Holdsworth	319	Wimbledon	319
27	David Wetherall	319	Leeds United	319
28	Kevin Hinchcock	315	Aspen Villa	315
29	Paul Williams	315	Conventry City	315
30	Kevin Muscat	315	Crystal Palace	315
31	Nicky Butt	310	Manchester United	310
32	Chris Powell	309	Derby County	309
33	Lee Dixon	309	Aspen Villa	309
34	Upo Ebiogu	307	Blackburn Rovers	307
35	Lars Bohinen	307	Tottenham Hotspur	307
36	Gary Mahboub	307	Barnsley	307
37	John Hendrie	302	Barnsley	302
38	Andrew Liddell	302	Leeds United	302
39	Jan Pearce	300	Leeds United	300
40	Lee Sharpe	295	Crystal Palace	295
41	Andy Roberts	295	Newcastle United	295
42	John Beresford	285	Chelsea	285
43	Gregor Le Saou	285	Leicester City	285
44	Pontus Karmark	278	Leicester City	278
45	Steve Clarke	277	Derby County	277
46	Bogdan Stancu	275	Derby County	275
47	Robbie Fowler	275	Leeds United	275
48	Robbie Fowler	275	Leeds United	275
49	Robbie Fowler	275	Leeds United	275
50	Robbie Fowler	275	Leeds United	275
51	Robbie Fowler	275	Leeds United	275
52	Robbie Fowler	275	Leeds United	275
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68	Robbie Fowler	275	Leeds United	275
69	Robbie Fowler	275	Leeds United	275
70	Robbie Fowler	275	Leeds United	275
71	Robbie Fowler	275	Leeds United	275
72	Robbie Fowler	275	Leeds United	275
73	Robbie Fowler	275	Leeds United	275
74	Robbie Fowler	275	Leeds United	275
75	Robbie Fowler	275	Leeds United	275

INTERNET LEAGUE

1	Mike Madden	Poachers never change	667
2	Mary Ann Kennedy	Inverness United	664
3	Graeme Dabnor	St Remy Strikers	645
4	Mary Ann Kennedy	Too Farr	640
5	Barrie Papa a la Bacon	Novice Spotters	627
6	Chris Forde	Game of Two Pints	627
7	P B	Bees XI	627
8	Michael Horan	St. Patrick's Charivaris	627
9	Tim Oldfield	Winstler Warriors 1	620
10	Graeme Miskusenko	Big Mac Europe	618
11	Mary Ann Kennedy	Old Kennedy RING	618
12	Michael Huddleston	Pulp Fiction III	618
13	Graeme Dabnor	St Remy Streethfingers	615
14	Jeremy Dwyer	Nudge Nudge Wink Wink	615
15	Suzanne Allan	Speed	615
16	Graeme Dabnor	St Remy Strollers	615
17	Mukund	Club Goulou	610
18	Andy Robson	Club 18-50	605
19	Henry Wheeler	Queen's Fan	605
20	Andrew Bates	Wetherby Racing 7	604

ALL IN THE WRONG Paul Shelley recreates the role of St John Redcliffe in Arthur Murphy's excellent 18th-century romp. One of the theatre's happiest rediscoveries returns again for the Christmas season.

Orange Tree, Clarence Street, Richmond (0171 940 3633). Mon-Sat, 7.45pm; mat. Thu (Jan 8, 19), 2.30pm; and Sat, 4pm. Extra mat. tomorrow, Jan 2, 4pm. Closed Jan 1. (5)

ART Ron Cook, Nigel Havers and Malcolm Story in this exceptionally interesting drama about the almost white-painted

Wyndham's, Charing Cross Road, WC2 (0171 389 1788). Tue-Sat, 8pm; mat. Wed, 3pm. Sat and Sun, 5pm.

BEAUTY AND THE BEAST Disney's film turned into a hit Broadway musical. Judd Hirsch, Brian Stokes Mitchell, and the rest of the cast

Adelphi, Shaftesbury Avenue, W1 (0171 494 5041). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; mat. Wed and Sat, 2.30pm. Until Jan 17.

CHICAGO Revised version of the celebrated Kander & Ebb musical directed by Walter Bobbie. A multi-Tony winner on Broadway last year. Starring

Adelphi, Shaftesbury Avenue, W1 (0171 494 5041). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; mat. Wed and Sat, 2.30pm. Until Jan 17.

CHICKS WITH FLICKS Jackie Lynne's impressive and double-camp musical tribute to the disco divas of the 1970s. Her impersonation of

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THEATRE GUIDE

Jerome Kingdon's assessment of theatre showing in London

House full, returns only
Seas at all prices

THE GOVERNMENT INSPECTOR Jonathan Wicks directs Tom Hollander as the presumed inspector, Brian Murphy as his servant and Ian McDiarmid as the

Adelphi, Shaftesbury Avenue, W1 (0171 494 5041). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; mat. Wed and Sat, 2.30pm. Until Jan 17.

A GRAND NIGHT OUT Wallace and Gromit take to the stage for Christmas, pursued to London by the

Adelphi, Shaftesbury Avenue, W1 (0171 494 5041). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; mat. Wed and Sat, 2.30pm. Until Jan 17.

AN IDEAL HUSBAND Return of Peter Hall's enjoyable production. A

Adelphi, Shaftesbury Avenue, W1 (0171 494 5041). Mon-Sat, 7.30pm; mat. Wed and Sat, 2.30pm. Until Jan 17.

A LETTER ON DISSENT Edward Fox and Celia Hoggan play

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LITTLE EYOLF Tantalizing play by Robert Glenister and Joanne Pearson at the heart of Adrian Noble's superb

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PETER PAN Ian McKellen plays Hook and Mr Darling, with Daniel Evans as the boy who won't grow up and Alec

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THE SLOW DRAG Jazz musician by Carson Kressley, loosely based on the story of Billy Taylor, a pianist who

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STEPPING OUT Musical version of Richard Herring's hit play (music and lyrics by David King and Mary Stewart)

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TREASURE ISLAND Tom Geary plays the role of Jim Hawkins, the young boy who

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Charles Causley at home in his beloved Launceston: "I used to think that you had to travel to find a subject. But my subject was right under my nose"

The Cornish balladeer

Jason Cowley meets the poet Charles Causley, who at 80 has just seen his collected works published

The life and work of Charles Causley has a remarkable rootedness. With the exception of his six years in the Navy during the Second World War, he has lived all his life in Launceston, the quiet north Cornish market town which provides the rural landscape of many of his poems. Reading Causley is a bit like listening to the long, withdrawing roar of the sea: his poetry has a sad music. He works in neglected forms: ballads, song, fable. In every sense, he is the last balladeer in England, drawing on the earthy mysterious and the folk-lore of Celtic Cornwall.

He didn't plan it this way. As a restless adolescent Causley, whose *Collected Poems* have just been published, wanted to escape village life and pursue his interest in poetry and left-wing politics in a distant, romanticised metropolis: London, Paris, New York. Launceston seemed closed and local, "not the kind of place for a writer". But he never left, instead, after the war, he became a teacher in the village school, living with his widowed mother, and about whom he writes with gentle comedy and whose stories of her impoverished childhood were sustenance for his poetry. "When I was young," he says, with soft Cornish vowels, "I used to think that you had to travel to find a subject. But my subject was right under my nose all the time. It took me so long to realise this."

We are driving around Launceston in a hired car, and Causley is sunk in reminiscence. His eyes water a little as he recalls the "soldier-father" he hardly knew. Charles Causley Senior fought in the trenches of the Western Front, and died of a lung disease when his son was seven. In his later poetry Causley returns, again and again, to those brief, flickering years with his father, so that writing about him becomes, as it were, an act of reclamation.

But remembrance is hard: "I had not thought that it would be like this," he writes at the end of *Eden Rock*, a meditation on his parents' relationship. To *My Father*, about his father's job as he listened to his gifted son reading the morning newspaper, is less successful, its lines "I know that one day he must stop and turn/His face to me. Wait for me, father. Wait—can I collapse into what can be a dagger for Causley, sentimentality."

"Turn left here," Causley says abruptly as we drive out of town. "That's the school where I used to teach. It's strange how things can change and yet remain the same. When I returned from the war everything, from the fields around us to the town itself, appeared exactly as I had left it. But, of course, it wasn't—because my experience had changed the way I looked at the world, changed what I saw."

This loss of innocence—or, more accurately, this fall into experience—defines his work.

At the age of 80, Charles Causley is frail, dreamy but intellectually alert. He walks shakily with a stick. His recollection of his father as a thin, bony man, "long-faced, and large-eyed," will do as a self-description. His conversation, punctuated by lines of half-remembered verse, swings between camp humour and nostalgia. He is prone to tears, and is shyly evasive about himself.

Yet ask him about his mother or about A.L. Rowse, the great Cornish scholar from whom he received encouragement as a young man, and he becomes immediately animated. "I sent Rowse some poems after I got back from the war. He wrote back, saying 'You've definitely got it, boy. The important thing now is to keep going at it. This was tremendous advice. You see, if I'd gone to London, I wouldn't have done any work.'"

Rowse had a strong work ethic. Like me, he was from a working-class Cornish home,

but unlike me he managed to win a scholarship to Oxford. My mother respected education but was not an intellectual. I grew up thinking that university was not for me."

Even when Causley was established, his mother viewed his work with wary suspicion. "She tolerated my poetry, but never really asked me why I wrote."

For all his modest reticence, Causley has a powerful sense of his own worth. He bristles when I mention that another poet describes him as an "important local poet", objecting to the pejorative use of the word "local".

So does he think his work will have a radiant afterlife? *Trusham*, a poem of raw self-accusation, offers a clue. Commenting on the fact that Causley never married and has no children ("I don't know what your Dad would say"), an old man mocks him: "It seems to me/That when you've gone, the name will just go scot."

To which the poet replies: "Useless to say that this particular flesh won't scrape off, dry off like the mud, the wet. What Causley means, of course, is that his words, his particular flesh, are his immense gamble against death, imperishably carrying his name into the future. It's not hard to guess what his Dad would say about that."

Collected Poems is published by Macmillan at £20

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AMY'S VIEW
 A new play by DAVID HARE

Richard Cork views the two magnificent sculptures that once graced the entrance to London's famous insane asylum

And so to Bedlam, with compassion

When London's Bethlem Hospital was rebuilt in Moorfields during the 1670s, it boasted the grandeur of a palace. The first custom-designed British hospital for the insane, this resplendent showpiece was meant to impress. But the two colossal figures carved for the gate, amounted to far more than extravagant ornamentation. They deserve to be ranked among the most outstanding sculptures ever produced in this country.

As the Museum of London's *Bedlam* exhibition reminds us, these monumental stone images left no one indifferent to their power. They quickly became the most celebrated works carved by Caspar Cibber, the Danish-born sculptor, already much admired for his allegorical bas-relief at the base of the Monument near London Bridge. Both figures, reclining on carved replicas of straw matting, occupied prominent positions on the ends of a broken pediment above the gate's elaborate stone piers.

Cibber's figures were perched about 14 ft above the ground, but their ample dimensions and expressive force were never forgotten by those passing between the high walls. The carvings became synonymous in the public mind not only with "Bedlam", but with the whole notion of madness itself. References to them abound in the art and literature of the following century, most notably in Pope's description of "Great Cibber's brazen brainless brothers" from *The Dunciad*, and Hogarth's overt quotation in the *Bedlam* scene from *A Rake's Progress*. Here the deranged Rake adopts a pose frankly reminiscent of the statue on the right side of the hospital gate.

We do not know who was responsible for commissioning Cibber to tackle such an audacious subject. The carvings only came to be known as *Raving Madness* and *Melancholy Madness* in the early 19th century. But the prevailing mood of these two immense figures was clearly intended to be harrowing. They set out to represent the two principal categories of mental disorder identified by contemporary authorities, and their expressions differ accordingly.

Despite the obvious contrast between the two figures, they are united by a profound sense of pathos. The chained figure on the right, who is the more exclamatory of the pair, opens his mouth to utter a cry. But the emotion he embodies is far closer to despair than anything more aggressive or terrifying. Cibber's terracotta model for the statue, revealing how carefully he related it to the form of the broken pediment below, has an authenticity which must derive from studying inmates in the hospital. It is significant that *Raving Madness* supposedly originated in Cibber's first-hand observation of Oliver Cromwell's



"Although Cibber's *Raving Madness* raises his fetters, he makes no real attempt to wrench them off his wrists. He knows how firm his chains really are, and his cry is an acknowledgement of captivity"

porter, Daniel, who entered Bedlam as a patient in 1656. His face, commemorated in an engraving, bears a resemblance to the statue, and the terracotta model has a directness and vivacity that might well derive from life.

In the end Cibber decided, probably because the high position of the carving demanded it, to lift the figure's left arm and push back his head to a more dramatic angle. This increase in outspoken feeling would have been conveyed to the viewer below with greater effectiveness. But Cibber stops short of resorting to melodramatic gestures. Although *Raving Madness* raises his fetters in the air, he makes no real attempt to wrench them off his wrists. He knows, all too well, how firm his chains really are, and the cry he utters is an acknowledgement of captivity.

Cibber's sympathy for victims of mental anguish becomes more clear in *Melancholy Madness*. Partially propping himself up on his matting, the unfortunate man stares out at a world he will never again be able to inhabit. Although the new Bethlem Hospital was dedicated to "the relief and cure of persons distracted", Cibber's doomed inmate appears irrecoverably

deranged. The extent of his predicament is conveyed, not through theatrical bluster, but by the lassitude afflicting his entire body. His legs bend abjectly as he realises that there is no point in raising himself above the bed. Here he reclines, massive in build and yet incapable of applying all that Caliban-like strength to any coherent purpose. His

interior was regarded as an entertainment, like going to the zoo. Hogarth included a couple of idle society ladies smirking in his *Bedlam* scene from *A Rake's Progress*. The presence of such voyeurs was bound to heighten the patients' unease. Most of them, after all, were incarcerated in spacious cells, easily viewable from the visitors' corridor. One journalist reported in 1753 that he had witnessed "a hundred spectators making sport of the miserable inhabitants, provoking them into fits of rage". And the pandemonium increased when other inmates began jangling chains or beating

the doors to support the beleaguered fellows. Cibber resisted this deplorable tendency to treat the insane as a hilarious sideshow. Despairing, helpless and embroiled in disorders of the brain so severe that they are deprived of all rational intelligence, his impotent figures are beyond mockery. How could anyone laugh at their suffering, when Cibber

had gone out of his way to avoid absurdity? Until the early 19th century, these carvings offered their onlookers a gravely compassionate vision of the alienation engendered by mental disorder.

The activities within Bedlam eventually began to conform to the spirit in which Cibber made the statues. By 1766 the hospital had decided that the London crowd should no longer be allowed to turn its premises into a vulgar amusement. Just over 20 years later, conditions had improved so much that a French observer described how "the poor creatures there are not chained up in dark cellars, stretched on cold paving stones... The doors are open, the rooms wainscotted, and long airy corridors give them a chance of exercise. A cleanliness, hardly conceivable unless seen, reigns in this hospital."

When Wordsworth wrote about his youthful London period in Book VII of *The Prelude*, he placed Cibber's carvings among the greatest wonders of the capital, worthy to be ranked alongside "the Tombs of Westminster", or "the giddy top/And Whispering Gallery of St. Paul's".

The carvings became synonymous with madness

AROUND THE LONDON GALLERIES

EARLIER works by Mark Fairington — technically expert copies of sections of 17th-century flower paintings laid against a flat coloured ground — make up a large proportion of his exhibition at the Todd Gallery. However, his most recent series shows enticing, light, dew-drenched visions of natural life. Among his close-ups of the natural world are a bug sitting on a much magnified berry and a hummingbird hovering beneath a flower. By obviously avoiding any reference to photorealism, Fairington aims to push his vision beyond the real thing. The new paintings manage to avoid being too obvious about the sinister side of beauty and start to combine obsessive artistic intention with the needs of the spectator.

Todd Gallery, 1-5 Needham Road, London W11 0JF (0171-792 1404), until Jan 31

A SERIES of large, digitally adulterated colour photographs of people laughing, their way through a 1970s cocktail party forms a quite perplexing part of sculptor Jordan Baseman's current exhibition. Elsewhere, in the other galleries, a few extremely small, sometimes real natural elements protrude from the wall. Scale seems everything and a great deal of surrounding space is necessary for the real fly's wings stuck on to a human tooth, the shrunken rabbit's head, or the cast of the very tip of a human tongue sticking out from the wall to have any presence at all. Unfortunately the strange twist of unpleasant fineness and real detail does not pay off. The taxidermist's trade mixes arbitrarily here with other elements to make a show that shifts uneasily between sculptural emptiness and suggestive imagery.

Richard Salmon, 59 South

Edwards Square, London W8 (0171-602 9494), until Jan 10

PHOTOGRAPHS in supplements, television film footage and a mass of fiction make India seem familiar. It is often difficult to concentrate, however, to stop flicking through the pages or news slots and to see past the general to the particular. The Festival Hall's exhibition of photographs, *A Celebration of Independence*, provides a broad survey. Peace processions, flags, marching: this is an historical vision combined with contemporary artistic accounts and caught moments. Sanjeer Sath's view of a woman in a courtyard crosses straight documentation with collage effect. Henri Cartier Bresson's classical, dignified, hugely extended black and white photographs, *Muslim Woman Praying at Dawn* (1948) or *Refugee Camp, Punjab* (1947), have figures extended across them as if in a frieze. From portraits such as that of the full-faced Maharaja of Baroda, through numerous religious ceremonies to a Republic Day Parade in 1966, Cartier-Bresson provides a concentrated but perhaps familiar perspective. Dayanita Singh takes apparently straight collective portraits of upper-class families and Dario Mitić documents the extraordinary *Children's Parliament*, while, on the other hand, Daniel Salgado's overall design, an overview of a mass of canal constructors, seems much the same as he would take anywhere in the world. Displayed on this good scale, it is possible to spend proper time with such a powerful place.

Festival Hall, South Bank SE1 (0171-960 4242), until Jan 18

SACHA CRADDOCK

Turning on to our great British oddballs

AMERICAN GALLERIES

The headline trumpets "Visionary Englishman A Revelation at Hirshhorn". Who can so spectacularly, unexpectedly have enthused the great mass of American critics? Samuel Palmer, perhaps? John Martin? Turner? No. The new revelation has sprung from the paintbrush of none other than Stanley Spencer, a retrospective of whose work is at present wowing them at the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington DC.

Such is the interconnection of the arts these days that it seems an important inspiration for the show was the New York run of the play *Stanley* earlier this year, which introduced Spencer to many Americans for the first time. But biographical interest is one thing, recognition of outstanding artistic quality another. Is Spencer's art too eccentric, too religious, too well, English to travel — not only to Washington, but also to Mexico City and San Francisco?

The general response ten years ago of foreign visitors to the Royal Academy's show *British Art in the 20th Century* augured well. The show's avowed intent was to tie the progress of British art closely into international Modernism, but what really enthused visitors from other countries was the work of oddballs like Spencer and Burra, who relat-

ed little, if at all, to anything outside their own vision. But if Spencer, once he kicks away his Pre-Raphaelite origins, has little obviously to do with anything in his own past or immediate surroundings, he is now perceived as having a surprisingly close connection with such a fashionable later figure as Lucian Freud. Paintings which have particularly impressed Americans are the "leg of mutton" double nude of himself and Patricia Preece, and the famously unsparing nudes of Preece from the mid-Thirties. The critics have also been much taken with the straight landscapes. The religious pieces set in Cookham have occasioned more puzzlement, partly because they seem to embody an almost naive faith: religion is apparently easier to take for the sophisticated if it comes fierce and unyielding, like the 1958 *Crucifixion*.

Spencer is not the only British national treasure to be touring the United States at the moment. The huge show *A Grand Design*, which has just begun its 18-month itinerary at Baltimore Museum of Art, does more than give a sample of standard "treasures" from the Victoria and Albert Museum. It sets out to give a serious

image of what the V&A does, and moreover of where it is coming from, right from its lofty educational Victorian origins in the wake of the Great Exhibition.

So visitors are expected not only to gaze at the right points, but also to come away with some understanding of how attitudes to the history and purposes of design have changed during the past 145 years, and how the Eurocentricity apparent in the collection to begin with has gradually been modified by, first, the concerns of empire and then, arising out of that, a genuinely "global village" approach. Along the way, Americans will find a path strewn with individual wonders, ranging from Romanesque enamels to Vivienne Westwood platform shoes, prints from Hogarth to Hockney, sculpture from Donatello to 13th-century Chinese, and fabulous textiles and costumes. If the show creates an appetite, it will tempt America to come to Britain in order to satisfy it.

JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR

Stanley Spencer: An English Vision is at the Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Washington DC (202 337 2222) to Jan 11. A Grand Design: The Art of the Victoria and Albert Museum is at Baltimore Museum of Art (410 436 7100) to Jan 11



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Sadism, silly suits and Stockport County



COUNSEL

DAVID
PANNICK QC

A review
of the
best, the
worst and
the oddest
in the
courts
during the
past year

The past year boasts strong contenders for the awards of most optimistic submission by counsel, most ridiculous law suit, most injudicious judge and most unsatisfactory juror — among other hotly contested honours.

Optimistic submission of 1997 was made on behalf of Stockport County Football Club, which was appealing against an industrial tribunal decision that the club's manager had been unfairly dismissed. The finance director had told the manager to come to a meeting the following day at which the finance director would "tear up his contract and shove it up his arse". The employment appeal tribunal noted that "it is suggested on behalf of the club that this was a very proper invitation to a disciplinary committee at which these matters would be fairly heard". The club's appeal failed.

Stupid law suit of the year was the one brought by a supporter of Leicester City Football Club, who unsuccessfully claimed damages from the Football Association on the ground that the referee's decision to award a penalty against his team in an FA Cup match caused him such distress that he had to miss two days' work. Close behind was the claim for negligence (dismissed by the Court of Appeal) by the man who won the 30-metre race for fathers at his children's primary school sports day, beating Robbie Fowler, the footballer — then ran into a brick wall.

As always, there was strong competition for absurd lawsuit of the year in a foreign court. In Seattle, Norman Mayo, a self-proclaimed "milkoholic" who had suffered a stroke, claimed damages from milk companies on the ground that "milk is just as dangerous as tobacco" and so dairy products should carry warnings. A man from Cork failed to persuade the Irish High Court that the four candidates for the Irish presidency, all women, should be eliminated because the Constitution referred to the President as "he". Injudicious judge of the year was Joseph Troisi, who resigned from the bench in West Virginia after he took off his robes, stepped down from the bench and bit a defendant on the nose. In this country, less than a week after resigning from the circuit bench, Angus MacArthur was jailed for 28 days for his third drink-driving offence in 12 years. In dismissing an appeal by a defendant convicted of various offences of dishonesty, the Court of Appeal held that "the fact that a judge might have fallen asleep during



Clockwise, from top left: Myra Hindley must stay in jail, Dame Shirley Porter has to pay £27 million, the Lord Chancellor compared himself with Cardinal Wolsey, another Kray went to jail, Carl Bridgewater's murder remains unsolved, Paula Jones can sue President Bill Clinton

part of the trial did not necessarily mean that prejudice had been caused to the appellant".

Unsatisfactory juror of the year was sitting at Luton Crown Court, where Judge Alan Wilkie, QC, had to order a retrial for a man accused of supplying crack cocaine because Shane Smyth told the defendant, from the jury box: "Why don't you plead guilty? You are ~~guilty~~ guilty." The Court of Appeal allowed an appeal by two jurors imprisoned by a Crown Court judge for contempt of court because he wrongly believed that they were refusing to give a verdict.

There was strong competition for witness of the year. Giving evidence during his libel action against *The Guardian* for alleging (among other

matters) that he supplied prostitutes to businessmen, Jonathan Aitken told of his horror at being asked by his son: "What's a pimp, Daddy?" Two weeks later, Mr Aitken abandoned his claim. Charlie Kray was sentenced to 12 years' imprisonment after being convicted of offering to supply large quantities of cocaine, despite evidence from "Mad Frankie" Fraser that Kray "wouldn't say boo to a goose. He's a lovely man."

An English barrister, appearing as an expert witness for Countess Spencer in her effort to obtain more money than her husband was offering in their divorce proceedings, told a South African court: "I'm not an estate agent, but personally I think £300,000 would only get a house in a very

unattractive distant suburb of London with problems, perhaps, of crime."

In the year in which the new Lord Chancellor, Lord Irvine of Lairg, criticised "fat cat lawyers", the award for unpleasant lawyers of the year was easily won by a firm of solicitors in Birmingham. After one of its lawyers hanged himself because of pressure of work, the firm sent his elderly mother a bill for more than £12,000 for the time spent dealing with his death (including a fee of £150 for telling her about the tragedy). The firm later waived the charges because of the adverse publicity. In civil cases, the Court of Appeal required the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority to reconsider whether Diane Blood

should be allowed to have a child using the sperm of her dead husband. The Court of Appeal also ruled that local authorities have a duty to house and feed impecunious applicants for asylum. The Divisional Court found Dame Shirley Porter, former leader of Westminster City Council, guilty of "wilful misconduct" in the "homes-for-votes" affair and upheld a £27 million surcharge by the District Auditor on her and her deputy.

Important criminal cases included the decision of the House of Lords that the Home Secretary should reconsider the tariff of 15 years which he had imposed on the 11-year-old boys convicted of murdering two-year-old James Bulger. In the Divisional Court, the Lord Chief Justice, Lord Bingham of Cornhill, dismissed a challenge by the Moors murderer, Myra Hindley, to the decision by the Home Secretary that she should spend the whole of her life in prison as punishment for her crimes. The Court of Appeal allowed appeals by three men who had served 18 years in prison for the murder of Carl Bridgewater.

A number of barristers suffered unusual experiences in the course of duty during 1997. A hearing at Guildford Crown Court had to be stopped in the afternoon because both prosecution and defence counsel were taken ill after eating a curry in the canteen at lunchtime. Trials at York station were delayed when the wind scattered defence counsel's documents on to the track. At the Old Bailey, prosecuting counsel broke down while reading to the court an account of the defendant's systematic torture of a baby.

The High Court granted Sir Nicholas Lyell, Attorney-General, in the last Conservative Government, an injunction to stop another man from standing in his constituency at the general election under the same name. After being prosecuted for an alleged criminal offence, the fake Sir Nicholas adopted the name by deed poll because the Attorney-General "had taken my good name; so I took his". The European Court of Human Rights caused unwelcome pain to solicitors by rejecting their complaint about their convictions for assault on consenting victims.

The United States Supreme Court ruled that Paula Jones could pursue her claim alleging that she had been sexually harassed in 1991 by Governor, now President, Bill Clinton. In Massachusetts, Judge Zobel reduced the murder conviction of the art pair Louise Woodward to a conviction for manslaughter, and sentenced her to 279 days in jail, the time she had already served. An Italian court decided that a wife was not responsible for her marriage breakdown when she walked out because of her mother-in-law's interference.

In England, Lady Justice Butler-Sloss, allowing an appeal by a mother who had lost custody of her children because they had seen her and her fiancé naked, explained in the Court of Appeal that judges "can be disapproving but they must not allow themselves to be shocked". In 1998 there will be more for judges to disapprove of, and ample temptation for them to be shocked.

© The author is a practising barrister and a Fellow of All Souls College, Oxford.

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This is the big time for an experienced City lawyer looking for a move. The London office of this top 5 US firm is a major player, and handles most US firms' offices in terms of work and package on offer. It is very keen on capital markets lawyers with 5+ years' exp, or heavy-hitting corporate lawyers. Ref: T39197

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Big is not necessarily better, especially in a niche such as employment law. This exceptionally successful City firm has a reputation for employment law that ranks it with the very best, and your career can only benefit by spending time here. If you can show 1-4 years' exp, you could be set up for life. Ref: T25709

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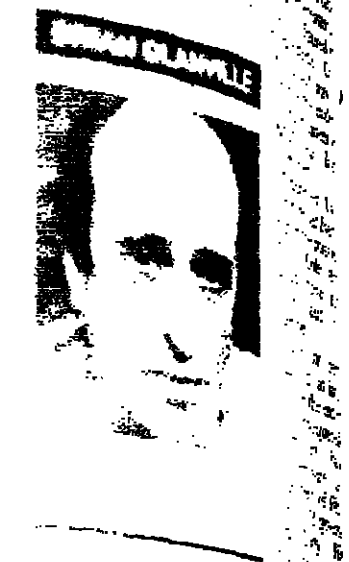
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RACING: TWO PREVIOUS CHELTENHAM FESTIVAL WINNERS SHOW THEIR WELLBEING AT LEOPARDSTOWN

Florida Pearl gives cultured performance

FROM CHRIS McGRATH
AT LEOPARDSTOWN

IT WAS more properly a day for swine, but instead there gleamed through the Leopardstown mire yesterday two pearls among the racehorses of Ireland. Both have already plundered the Cheltenham Festival once and, with any luck, they will be back in March, seeking another fragile cargo of dreams.

In Doran's Pride, the Irish already have the favourite for the Tote Cheltenham Gold Cup itself. Istabraq's similar status in the Smurfit Champion Hurdle market took him



Florida Pearl, ridden by Dunwoody, clears the last on an impressive winning debut over fences at Leopardstown yesterday

RICHARD EVANS
Nags: Pavlova
(2.10 Hurdle)
Pavlova needs soft ground to show his best form and the Richard Rowe-trained chaser will be in good luck today for the first time since his last success at the Sussex track last year.

NB: Goodtime George
(3.50 Strauld)

the top of yesterday's bill, but he all but had the show stolen by Florida Pearl.

Each had bravely justified daunting expectations last season, Istabraq landing the Royal Sun Alliance Hurdle under a breathing ride from Charlie Swan and Florida Pearl turning airy talk into hard currency in the Festival Bumper.

While Istabraq's sauntering win, at 6-1 on, in the AIB Agri-Business December Hurdle revealed little - other than perhaps that Aidan O'Brien is nurturing a turn of foot in this relentless galloper - there

was something freshly marvellous about the performance of Florida Pearl.

Willie Mullins is shrewdly sparring his five-year-old the clattering ordeal of hurdles. From the family of Pearlyman and a point-to-point winner in his youth, Florida Pearl went

straight over fences in the Farming Independent Beginners' Chase - and with such aplomb that Richard Dunwoody declared him one of the best novices he has ridden. The Ladbrokes representative duly felt able to preserve an unwaveringly straight face in

quoting him at 25-1 for the 1999 Gold Cup.

As if anticipating potential for a sacred Festival "banker", the crowds huddled round the paddock as soon as they discerned the white face of Florida Pearl emerging through the rain. When the 17

horses galloped into the murk, his blaze was soon glinting out of trouble, up in the van. Jumping fluently, if prudently, he was in front by the sixth and there was only the briefest of challenges from Delphi Lodge turning for home.

That rival was cruelly ex-

posed for his impudence, left floundering while Florida Pearl galloped down the straight. After jumping the last, moreover, he quickened away on his own initiative, winning by 20 lengths. "That's what most pleased me," Mullins said. "He really

sprinted clear in this heavy ground, even though nothing was upstides. It was lively ground at Cheltenham, so I don't think we'll be worrying about the going any more.

"He has been a bit sluggish at the start of his schooling sessions, and I was worried he would find himself down the pack early on. But we got him jumping very quickly when schooling him at Tipperary the other day, and Richard took the bull by the horns."

It may yet prove that Florida Pearl will require testing ground over shorter trips, so Mullins will wait until the week before Cheltenham before choosing between the Royal Sun Alliance Chase, the Cathcart or the Guinness Article Trophy.

The rain made the ground less holding than on Sunday and Istabraq certainly enjoyed himself when held up, gliding against four considerably less energetic animals. Closing two out, Swan savoured some lingering looks over his shoulder after passing Dunwoody, labouring on Punting Pete, at the last.

Still cantering, the J P McManus colours crossed the line 25 lengths ahead. "It made sense to hold him up," McManus said. "You don't know how hard a race you need to have in front."

O'Brien was relieved enough, some of his charges having disappointed badly at this meeting. "No horse wants it this testing really, but he needed a run," he said. "Now we'll come back here for the Irish Champion Hurdle on January 25, and then hopefully straight to Cheltenham. He has got a good bit more pace this year."

ICE HOCKEY

Cobras are punished for baring their teeth

By NORMAN DE MESQUITA

IN THE Express Cup on Sunday, Ayr Scottish Eagles maintained their 100 per cent record with a 5-3 win over Manchester Storm. Bracknell Bees gained a surprise 6-5 away win over Sheffield Steelers and Basingstoke Bison beat Newcastle Cobras 2-1 with an overtime goal by Blair Scott, upsetting the Cobras so much that three of their players received misconduct penalties for "abuse of an official".

The three were Dale Lambert, the coach, Ross, his brother and Chris Norton, the assistant coach. They claimed that one of the passes leading up to the deciding goal was directed by a Basingstoke player's hand. The goal stood and the Cobras are still looking for their first win in the cup, although they did get a point for the overtime loss.

Bracknell took a three-goal lead in the first period at Sheffield and made it 4-0 in the second, before the Steelers pulled back two goals. When Chris Kelland made it 5-5 with little more than three minutes remaining it looked as though the Steelers had salvaged a draw, but Jeff Johnstone scored the winning goal for the Bees 37 seconds later.

Manchester led 2-1 midway through the first interval at Ayr but the Eagles were level before the first interval, led 4-3 at the second break and scored the only goal of the final period to secure their eighth victory.

HOCKEY

Wright puts Midlands on course

By CATHY HARRIS

TWO second-half penalty corner goals by Sally Wright helped the Midlands to beat the South 3-0 and maintain their unbeaten record in the under-21 regional tournament at Milton Keynes yesterday. They need only draw their final game against the North today to regain the title that they last won two years ago.

Natalie Hannah, who attended Bromsgrove School with Wright, scored the third goal to condemn the South to a third successive defeat. Both players also scored, along with Lesley Irvine, in the 3-1 victory over the holders, East.

In the other matches, Laura Hughes scored the only goal of the match for the North against the West, while strikes from Jo Pope and Marianne Hood steered the West to a 2-0 win against the South.

With some of the best eligible players missing because they are required for senior squad training, the competition is unlikely to be staged at this time next year. The national coach, Maggie Souvay, said: "When you consider the weather, Christmas and indoor starting next week, it's not the best time."

FIXTURES

FOOTBALL

Kick-off 7.30 unless stated
Newcastle United League
First division: Arsenal v Blackburn
Norwich v Portsmouth (7.45)
Belfast Scottish League
First division:
Hamilton v Aldrie
RYAN LEAGUE: Second division: Bracknell v Basingstoke
Third division: Basingstoke v Bracknell
Fourth division: Basingstoke v Bracknell
Fifth division: Basingstoke v Bracknell
Sixth division: Basingstoke v Bracknell
Seventh division: Basingstoke v Bracknell
Eighth division: Basingstoke v Bracknell
Ninth division: Basingstoke v Bracknell
Tenth division: Basingstoke v Bracknell
Eleventh division: Basingstoke v Bracknell
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Mystery with a thoroughly modern flavour

Which of us wasn't counting the minutes to last night's conclusion of *The Woman in White* (BBC1), having been left dangling by the great Callow changeover? Yes, of course we had all realised, as Sunday's instalment was ending, that it was Simon Callow's dastardly deed to have betrayed Marian Pritchard and her half-sister, Laura, to the hateful Sir Percival Glyde, but we were still unable to unravel Wilkie Collins's biggest mystery: how had only-poly Simon Callow got so slim since we last saw him? And would he, like Nigel Lawson, now be publishing a diet book?

Actually, it's a triumph we even noticed Callow's birth, since every time Tara Fitzgerald's Marian appeared on screen it was hard to tell whether she was the same actress or anything else. Fitzgerald's face can say more in ten seconds than many actors manage in ten minutes: her eyes, like microdots, are loaded with an improbable amount of coded, sensitive information, which she conveys with twitches and glints. It made her the perfect pivot for a story that the BBC, cleverly decided to fast-forward into two pacey episodes rather than a dozen plodding ones even though this meant denying us the pleasure of seeing the sinister (albeit slimmer) Fosco get his comeuppance.

And by giving Fitzgerald the punchiness of a plain-speaking, modern-day heroine, scriptwriter David Pirie not only rid Collins's story of some of the clichés of costume drama (apart, that is, from casting James "frock-coat" Wilby as Glyde, but he injected it with the adrenalin of a contemporary thriller. This is in spite of the fact that the plot, which is powered by Sir Percival's ability effectively to imprison his wife and Marian on his remote estate as he manoeuvres to kill Laura (Justine Waddell) for her inheritance —

would be pretty much impossible if, say, the telephone had existed in the mid-19th century. Mobile telephones, of course, would make the story even more of a nonsense, unless Sir Percival's estate happened to reside in one of those posh, remote, dead-end zone for Mercury One-2-One.

By taking Collins's story out of its museum case, Tim Fywell's direction conveyed more persuasively why *The Woman in White* created such a hullabaloo when it first came out. Perfumes, ships, dances and bonnets were named after it. Which stories today would inspire manufacturers in quite the same way? Officially licensed *Lion King* sweatshirts, yes, but probably not impromptu *English Patient* perfume, in spite of its Oscars; nor can one imagine HMS *The God of Small Things*.

Hitler, depressingly, had considerably more success with his murder plans than did Glyde. *The Lost Children of Berlin* (BBC2) brought together 50 or so survivors of the Grosses Hamburgerstrasse School, which once taught the children of Jewish Berlin's 50,000-strong Jewish community, before the Gestapo diligently picked off the pupils and teachers, as though flicking irksome specks off their epaulettes. Each morning the children would arrive to find another empty desk in the classroom where their best friend had sat only yesterday; or another teacher reported to a concentration camp. Sometimes it was their own fathers who had been stolen in the night. These were the children — fatherless, teacherless, friendless — for whom "Ich bin ein Berliner", John Kennedy's call for solidarity in the face of despotism, came 25 years too late.

The children learnt metalwork, not maths. "I didn't finish my education," recalls Israel Loewenstein. "I went to school only for seven years. Our head was not for studying, our head was for surviving." By 1942, all the surviving children could fit into one classroom. Then the school was closed down. The children tried to close down. Hans Radziewski, who had earned pocket money gardening in the cemetery, took refuge among the graves: "One summer there were loose covers. You could open them and hide in there. There were also graves that were to be used the next day. They were covered, so you could hide in those, too."

REVIEW

Joe Joseph

Elizabeth McIntyre's film ends with a former pupil, standing in the hall of the recently reopened and redecorated Grosses Hamburgerstrasse School, reciting names of long-dead classmates, killed in concentration camps. Strangely enough, the school's piano had survived intact.

German schoolchildren were also taught how to spot any Jewish children still at large. There was even a book, *The Poison Mushroom*, which instructed them in the knack of detecting the poisonous mushroom from among the edible ones: Jews were portrayed as poisonous, and therefore a threat to the Nazi ideal of a racially pure Germany. To make detection even easier, all Jewish boys had to change their name to Israel, and all Jewish girls to Sarah. Oh yes, and Jewish kids were banned from keeping pets. And they had to wear a yellow star, too. For smart Aryans, those Nazis certainly required plenty of clues to help them along.

BBC1

7.00am News (T) (2225058) 7.10 Poddington Peas (2288547) 7.15 Teletubbies (T) (2288588) 7.40 The Busy World of Richard Scarry (2202180) 8.05 Gaspard (2288588) 8.30 Sweet Valley High (1159224) 8.50 Teletubbies (2288588) 10.20 News (T) (2288588)

10.30 The Shaggy Dog (1959) Disney fantasy comedy for children of all ages. Fred MacMurray and Tommy Kirk. (77943)

12.00 Waiting for God 1993 Christmas edition (T) (16517)

12.30pm Celebrity Ready, Steady, Cook (T) (37789)

1.00 News (T) and weather (5097485)

1.15 Neighbours (T) (73019634)

1.35 Wee Wee: A Dinosaur's Story (1993) Animated adventure featuring a host of famous voices, including John Goodman, Felicity Kendal and Rhea Perlman. (903701)

2.40 Vets in Practice (T) (T) (4483082)

3.10 The World's Strongest Man Last semi-final (T) (7287059)

3.40 Balls to Africa: The Comic Relief all-star football team (T) (8162768)

4.30 Tom and Jerry (7232740)

4.40 A Fantastic Family Christmas (2288588)

5.05 Newsround '97 (T) (3755618)

5.35 Neighbours (T) (T) (407301)

6.00 News (T) and weather (835450)

6.15 Regional News (835005)

6.30 Watchdog: House Style presented by Anne McAvoy (T) (905)

7.00 Holiday Postcard: Hong Kong. Driving School's Maureen Rees on a fly-drive visit to Spain, the Italian coast of Viareggio and a weekend in Suffolk. (7092)

7.30 EastEnders: Grant and Phil fight to build a new bridge with their wives (T) (189)

8.00 Mrs Dalloway (1993) Robin Williams as a man who poses as a female to become a nanny to his own children when his wife walks out on him. With Pierce Brosnan and Sally Field. Directed by Chris Columbus. (T) Continued after the News (558)

9.00 News (T) and weather (5479)

9.30 FILM: Mrs Doubtfire Concluded (T) (7274)

10.30 Review of the Year: David Dimbleby looks back on the death of Diana, Princess of Wales, as well as other memorable events of 1997: Labour's return to power after an absence of 18 years; Hong Kong's return to China, the vote for devolution in Scotland and Wales (T) (830289)

11.45 Carry On Up the Khyber (1988) One of the best of the Carry On series. Set in India a tale of the British Raj having trouble with a native revolt. Directed by Gerald Thomas. (441053)

1.15am A Nightingale Sang in Berkeley Square (1979) Defunct singer and actress, Gloria Grahame stars in a crime caper based on a true story. Directed by Ralph Thomas. (513124)

2.55 Weather (2049967)

3.00 BBC News 24

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BBC2

7.05am Keesee: Chronicaling the history of the screen kiss (T) (7557585)

7.50 The Phil Silvers Show (b/w) (T) (6941547)

8.15 Great Mysteries and Myths of the 20th Century: Mata Hari (222786)

8.40 42nd Street (1933) Classic Gatsby. Barbra Streisand plays a showgirl who becomes a Broadway star. With Walter Matthau, Ruby Keeler and a young Ginger Rogers. Directed by Lloyd Bacon. (146071)

10.05 The Great Romances of the 20th Century: Douglas Fairbanks and Mary Pickford (T) (7418498)

10.35 The Stratton Story (1949) James Stewart stars as Monty Stratton, a talented baseball player. With June Allyson, Agnes Moorehead. Directed by Sam Wood. (1946011)

12.15pm Perfect Day (814301)

12.20 Cambridge Folk Festival (2/3) Richard Thompson, Jackson Browne, Afro-Celt Sound System. (412653)

1.10 Finscreen Sam (33357108)

1.20 The Royal Institution Christmas Lectures: The Magical Muses (3/5) (2834363)

2.20 The Crimson Pirate (1952) Burt Lancaster stars as a 19th-century pirate, with James Hayter. Directed by Robert Siodmak. (927185)

4.00 Everything to Play For Last in series (T) (818)

4.30 Vera Cruz (1954) Western, with Gary Cooper, Burt Lancaster and Ernest Borgnine. Directed by Robert Aldrich. (58924)

5.00 The Man Who Never Was (1956) Fact-based wartime drama with Clifton Webb, Gloria Grahame, Robert Fleming, Stephen Boyd. Directed by Ronald Neame. (4784258)

7.43 Perfect Day (T) (89450)

7.45 University Challenge Britain v US (T) (801672)

8.15 The Travel Show: Winter holidays in North and Central America (605769)

9.00 Modern Times: The Shrine. A study of the mummies who flocked to pay their respects to Diana, Princess of Wales (1200330)

10.15 Stella Street (281672)

Healy's passion for leaks (10.00pm)

10.00 King Leek Comedy drama with Tim Healy and Su Elliot (T) (9936)

11.00 News (T) and weather (412081)

11.15 Regional News (300769)

11.25 Unlawful Entry (1997) Thriller with Kurt Russell, Ray Liotta and Madeleine Stowe. After a break-in, a couple become friendly with the local policeman who answered their call. Directed by Jonathan Kaplan. (T) (791498)

1.25am Collins and Maconie's Movie Club (4010122)

1.55 Planet Mirth (8640702)

2.25 Danielle Steel's Fine Things Drama in which an executive falls for a beautiful child with a young daughter. (T) (8505290)

5.00 Football Extra (4270493)

5.55 News (6901528)

HTV

6.00am GMTV (2125272)

9.25 The Fantastic Voyages of Sinbad the Sailor (192769)

9.55 Regional News (7408011)

10.00 Freakazoid! (16363)

10.30 DARYL (1985) with Mary Beth Hurt, Michael McKean and Barbet Odier. A couple adopt a ten-year-old boy, little realising that he is, in fact, a robot. Directed by Simon Wincer. (T) (87990301)

12.20pm Regional News (8899052)

12.30 News (T) and weather (5703214)

12.55 Baywatch: The Runaways (T) (240624)

1.30 Cartoon Time (T) (1734848)

1.40 Joe Versus the Volcano (1990) Tom Hanks, as a man who accepts a bizarre proposition when told he has six months to live. Also with Meg Ryan and Lloyd Bridges. Directed by John Patrick Shanley. (T) (51023479)

3.30 News (T) and weather (2547769)

3.45 Regional News (8895058)

3.45 Three Amigos! (1986) Comedy western starring Chevy Chase, Steve Martin and Martin Short as fearless heroes on the silent screen. Directed by John Landis. (T) (298721)

5.40 News (T) and weather (557479)

6.00 The Baldy Man: Pins and Needles and Casually Bystanding (491276)

6.25 Regional News (300585)

6.30 Regional News (T) (301)

7.00 Emmerdale Kim has a plan to rid herself of the blackmailer (T) (2160)

7.30 WALE: Antiques Trail (585)

7.30 Secrets of the Levels: A Year on West Moor (T) (T) (585)

8.00 Police, Camera, Action! (T) (8108)

8.30 The Bill: Boyden and Page get involved with an elderly villain's final job (T) (2853)

9.00 McCallum: The forensic pathologist returns in the first of two four-part dramas (T) (718)

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5.55 News (6901528)

CENTRAL

As HTV West except:

12.54pm Air Watch (22951301)

12.55-1.30 The Fashion Police (2840924)

5.59-6.00 Air Watch (146672)

6.30-7.00 Central News (301)

7.30-8.00 Motoway (585)

1.55am Film: The Satan Bug (1965) A schlock thriller starring George Eastman, Richard Basehart and Ann Francis. Directed by John Sturges. (48617141)

4.00 Film: The Breaking Point (16185)

WESTCOUNTRY

As HTV West except:

9.55-10.00 Birthday People (7408011)

12.20pm-12.30 Illuminations (989092)

12.55-1.30 Emmerdale (2840924)

6.00-7.00 Westcountry Live (30585)

7.30-8.00 Stirling Star (585)

METRO

As HTV West except:

12.55-1.30 Shortland Street (2840924)

6.00 Meridian Tonight (721)

6.30-7.00 The Baldy Man (301)

7.30-8.00 Great Places of the South (585)

ANGELIA

As HTV West except:

12.19 Anglia Air Watch (9818127)

12.55-1.30 Millionaires (2840924)

5.39-5.40 Anglia Air Watch (135108)

6.00 And Take This Bus to Cuba (491276)

6.23 Anglia Weather (301214)

6.25-7.00 Anglia News (782301)

7.30-8.00 Out to Lunch with Brian Turner (585)

11.44 Anglia Air Watch (552295)

Starts: 6.00am Sesame Street (82127)

7.00 The Baby'sitters Club (9916450)

7.30 Two Stupid Dogs (8221214)

8.00 The Big Breakfast (11818)

10.00 Zig and Zag's Big Morning (8631011)

10.01 Happy Days (9643853)

10.35 Saved by the Bell (1167450)

11.05 Moesha (2827108)

11.30 The Monkees (8283633)

12.05pm Coping With (2097011)

12.35 Erie, Indiana (5700127)

1.00 Sport Mithrin (5096756)

1.15 Pingu (50955721)

3.00 Boy Meets World (12450)

2.00 A Woman of Substance (9130)

4.00 Bewitched (214)

4.30 Countdown (498)

5.00 5 Pump: Uned 5 (5893160)

5.40 Crefyddau: Byd Wedi Eu Hanmaddid: Florid y Bwrda (848721)

6.00 Newyddion 6 (864108)

6.10 Heno (240740)

6.30 Pobl y Cwm (512653)

7.25 Clorwen Llangollen (5337943)

8.30 Donau Donau Don (858)

9.00 Cygan yr Ader (1022498)

10.15 Newyddion (82063)

10.30 Newyddion (163452)

11.05 And Finally - Rory Bremner (474468)

12.10am Nobody Does It Better: The Music of James Bond (6209054)

1.10 Smash It Up! (9761238)

CHANNEL 4

6.00am Sesame Street (82127)

7.00 The Baby'sitters Club (T) (9916450)

7.30 Two Stupid Dogs (T) (8221214)

8.00 The Big Breakfast (11818)

10.00 Zig and Zag's Big Morning (8631011)

10.01 Happy Days (T) (9643853)

10.35 Saved by the Bell (T) (1167450)

11.05 Moesha (T) (2827108)

11.30 The Monkees (T) (8283633)

12.05pm Coping With: School (2/6) (2097011)

12.35 Erie, Indiana (T) (5700127)

1.00 The Entertainers: More about the club circuit in the North East (T) (18634)

2.00 A Woman of Substance starring Deborah Kerr, Jenny Seagrove and John Mills (2/3) (T) (9130)

4.00 Bewitched (214) 4.30 Countdown (T) (208363)

4.55 Ricki Lake. Today's guest believes her late mother is trying to settle unfinished business (T) (547128)

5.30 Dr Who and the Daleks (1965) starring Peter Cushing, Roy Castle and Jennie Linden. Big screen version of the popular sci-fi television series. Directed by Gordon Flemying. (T) (86276)

7.00 Channel 4 News (T) and weather (3030)

7.30 Interview with a Zombie with Robyn Llewellyn in Haiti (T) (T) (75672)

8.30 Brookside Elaine arranges to meet Cassie and Mick. Sinbad is concerned about his health (T) (8585)

Mr White Goes to Westminster

A comedy drama written by Guy Jenkin of Drop the Dead Donkey fame, starring Bill Paterson as a former TV foreign correspondent who is elected to Westminster on an anti-secrets ticket. Also with Celia Imrie, David Kynan and Samantha Bond (T) (9818)

10.30 And Finally - Rory Bremner

The comedian's fifth Christmas special (T) (74108)

11.30 Smash It Up! The story of some of the people caught up in popular political protest (T) (415160)

12.20am Cronos (1982) A horror movie starring Federico Luppi and Claudio Brook, set in Mexico City. An elderly antique dealer is transformed into a vampire and granted eternal life. Directed by Guillermo del Toro. In English and Spanish with subtitles (990290)

2.00 Mission: Impossible (39561)

3.00 Brother Orchid (1940, b/w) starring Edward G. Robinson and Humphrey Bogart. A comedy thriller about a gangster determined to be reinstated as the boss of his crime empire. Directed by Lloyd Bacon. (406238)

4.35-6.00 The Hatchet Man (1932, b/w) starring Edward G. Robinson. A drama about the San Francisco slum wars. Directed by William A. Wellman. (2347802)

CHANNEL 5 ON SATELLITE

Channel 5 is now broadcasting on transponder No 63 on the Astra Satellite. Viewers with a Videocrypt decoder will be able to receive the channel free of charge. Frequencies for transponder No 63 are: 10.92075 GHz; sound: 7.52 and 7.62 MHz

6.00am Dappledown Farm (T) (7885363)

6.30 The Wind in the Willows (24551568)

6.50 Mr Men and Little Miss (30176301)

7.00 Womble's House (9508861) 7.30 Ahn and the Chipmunks (859238) 8.00 Hakazoo (T) (2102045) 8.30 The Bush Patrol (T) (450258) 9.00 Sister's Around (T) (454238) 9.30 Wishbone (T) (1156092)

10.00 The End Byron Secret Series: Secret of Spigley House. The four children come to the aid of a kidnapped young prince (37583837)

11.50 Animal Xtra: Thyacin — Tasmanian Tiger (90534943) 12.00 The Bold and the Beautiful (T) (6521562)

12.30am Family Affairs (T) (1167108)

1.00 5 News (8840949) 1.05 Sunset Beach (T) (4743030)

2.00 Running Bear (1983) with Robby Benson. The story of Billy Mills, a Sioux Indian who left his reservation to find fame on the running track. Directed by D.S. Everett. (4575353)

3.55 Holiday Affair (1981, b/w) with Robert Mitchum, Jane Fonda and Wendell Corey. A romantic drama about a young war widow who is torn between two very different men. Directed by Don Hartman. (912721)

5.30 Whistle (T) (4316872) 6.00 100 Per Cent (431585) 6.30 Family Affairs (T) (4004837) 7.00 Exclusive (576450) 7.30 Empire of the Night (T) (75672)

8.00 Visions: Day With Vanessa Feltz spends her day with Neil and Christine Hamilton. (5761498)

8.30 5 News (T) (5760905)

Bumbling botanist Moranis (9.00pm)

9.00 Little Shop of Horrors (1986) A cult comedy starring Rick Moranis as a man who finds and nurtures a weird plant. Directed by Frank Oz. (3219858)

10.50 The Jack Docherty Show (1228498)

11.35 Prisoner: Cell Block H (9238337)

12.30am Too Young to Die (1980) with Juliette Lewis as a young woman facing the death penalty for the murder of her lover. Robert Markowitz directs. (4803219)

2.20 Little Dorrit — Little Dorrit's Story (1987) The conclusion of the adaptation of Dickens's classic, begun last night (3740050)

5.25 The Road a profile of Reba McEntire (7741222)

5.30 100 Per Cent (T) (7659498)

THE HISTORY CHANNEL

4.00pm China Rising (8227130) 5.00 India (8225282) 6.00 Ancient Egypt (7024069) 7.00 Biography: Eleanor Roosevelt (161612) 8.00 The American Revolution (161612)

CARLTON FOOD (cable)

12.00pm Food Network Daily 12.30 A Day in the Kitchen 1.00 Food for Thought 1.30 Food for Thought 2.00 Food for Thought 3.00 Food for Thought 4.00 Food for Thought 5.00 Food for Thought 6.00 Food for Thought 7.00 Food for Thought 8.00 Food for Thought 9.00 Food for Thought 10.00 Food for Thought 11.00 Food for Thought 12.00 Food for Thought

LIVING

6.00pm Tiny Living 9.00 The Heat Is On 10.00 The Young and the Restless 11.00 Brooklyn South 12.00 The Young and the Restless 1.00 The Young and the Restless 2.00 The Young and the Restless 3.00 The Young and the Restless 4.00 The Young and the Restless 5.00 The Young and the Restless 6.00 The Young and the Restless 7.00 The Young and the Restless 8.00 The Young and the Restless 9.00 The Young and the Restless 10.00 The Young and the Restless 11.00 The Young and the Restless 12.00 The Young and the Restless

ZEE TV

6.00am Pashu Pashu 7.00 Jaagran 7.30 India Business Report 8.00 Zee Business News 8.15 Zee Music 8.30 Zee News 8.45 Zee News 9.00 Zee News 9.15 Zee News 9.30 Zee News 9.45 Zee News 10.00 Zee News 10.15 Zee News 10.30 Zee News 10.45 Zee News 11.00 Zee News 11.15 Zee News 11.30 Zee News 11.45 Zee News 12.00 Zee News

MTV

The 24 hour music channel

VH-1

The video hits channel

For further listings see Saturday's Vision

SKY 1

6.00am Morning Glory (85225) 6.00 Hot 100 (13530) 6.30 The World (13530) 6.50 Days of Our Lives (13530) 7.00 The World (13530) 7.30 The World (13530) 7.50 The World (13530) 8.00 The World (13530) 8.30 The World (13530) 8.50 The World (13530) 9.00 The World (13530) 9.30 The World (13530) 9.50 The World (13530) 10.00 The World (13530) 10.30 The World (13530) 10.50 The World (13530) 11.00 The World (13530) 11.30 The World (13530) 11.50 The World (13530) 12.00 The World (13530) 12.30 The World (13530) 12.50 The World (13530) 1.00 The World (13530) 1.30 The World (13530) 1.50 The World (13530) 2.00 The World (13530) 2.30 The World (13530) 2.50 The World (13530) 3.00 The World (13530) 3.30 The World (13530) 3.50 The World (13530) 4.00 The World (13530) 4.30 The World (13530) 4.50 The World (13530) 5.00 The World (13530) 5.30 The World (13530) 5.50 The World (13530) 6.00 The World (13530) 6.30 The World (13530) 6.50 The World (13530) 7.00 The World (13530) 7.30 The World (13530) 7.50 The 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RUGBY UNION 31

Newcastle's charge to the top under threat from Leicester

SPORT

TUESDAY DECEMBER 30 1997

Selectors prefer Atherton as one-day captain



Atherton: regained control

ADAM HOLLOAKE will not, after all, continue in charge of England's one-day side. Widespread expectation that his reward for winning the Champions Trophy in Sharjah would come with his reappointment for the limited-overs series in the West Indies proved misplaced yesterday when the selectors instead restored Michael Atherton.

The surprise announcement was made by the chairman of selectors, David Graveney, at a hotel near Warwick, where the England A team players were gathering before departing for Kenya and Sri Lanka. The management team for that tour comprises Graveney's fellow selectors, Graham Gooch and Mike Gatting, and their views were undoubtedly paramount in the decision.

The two former England captains apparently expressed reservations about the concept of dividing the

position between two men. Plainly, there was a fear that the authority of the overall captain might be diminished. Atherton, therefore, will retain control for the full 14-week stay in the Caribbean where, ironically, he is at present on holiday.

Holloake, who will be his vice-captain for the five-match one-day series, put a brave face on what must have come as a shock. "It was obviously a difficult decision for the selectors," he said. His consolation is that all but two of his victorious Sharjah party will be involved. Of the 13-man squad named yesterday, seven will be flown in specifically for the limited-overs games.

Only Alistair Brown and Peter Martin have been omitted from the Sharjah contingent but the ten members of the full West Indies tour party missing from the 13 will not automatically be sent home. Up to three of them may be added to the

By ALAN LEE, CRICKET CORRESPONDENT

one-day party at a later date and Darren Gough, the most notable omission, is an obvious candidate.

The selectors have acted with admirable alacrity in making their verdict public before the tour begins, the idea being to pre-empt prolonged and distracting speculation. It is now, however, an issue that is unlikely to disappear for the very valid reason that the selectors may have got it wrong.

There was good cause for continuing the experiment with Holloake and it had nothing to do with the inevitable overreaction to victory in Sharjah. The protection and preservation of Atherton for the more gruelling business of Test cricket was a powerful motivation and there must now be a danger that he will come to regret this show of loyalty.

It is not that Atherton dislikes

one-day cricket, nor even that he plays or captains it poorly. It is just that he devotes such physical and mental energy to the Test cricket he rightly considers the priority that he sometimes has little left to offer when the instant internationals come around.

This is especially pertinent for a tour structured as this one is, with the one-day cricket concluding the itinerary. No matter the outcome of a Test series that means so much to him, will Atherton be reinvigorated by the prospect of five one-day games in 11 days?

How much better it would have been to allow him to take his place in those games simply as a batsman, a privilege he still deserves, while releasing him from the burdens of leadership. Instead, Atherton will now find himself

scrutinised harshly against the populist attractions of Holloake.

Graveney was insistent that the decision had been unanimous and that there had been no change of thinking. "I said in Sharjah that we must go away and talk about it," he said. "It was being widely written up that Adam would keep the job, but it was never said by any of us."

So widely was it being reported, indeed, that the CeeFax service erroneously carried a story, two weeks ago, confirming Holloake's reappointment. Graveney, the tour manager in Sharjah, quickly had this removed but the impression remained strong that the decision only required official corroboration.

Atherton, who was telephoned in Jamaica by Graveney yesterday, had done no more than express a preference that the matter should be resolved quickly. Losing the leadership of the one-day side would not

unduly have distressed him; losing his place in the side most certainly would have done.

Gooch spoke out in defence of the captain's approach to one-day cricket and scotched suggestions that he had little interest in it. "I have been working closely with Michael since early November and I have never heard him say anything about not playing in every England game," he said. "He is very determined to rediscover his best form."

Atherton added: "I have always been keen to play one-day cricket and that remains my view. I am looking forward to working with Adam. He did an outstanding job in Sharjah and all of us in the West Indies will be keen to find out how things worked there and to continue that momentum."

Donald's landmark, page 34
Young guns, page 34

Problems increase for head coach

Gross's future at Tottenham under a cloud

By RUSSELL KEMPSON

FURTHER doubt was cast over the future of Christian Gross as head coach of Tottenham Hotspur yesterday when the Department for Education and Employment turned down the application for a work permit for Fritz Schmid, Gross's fitness adviser.

When Gross joined Tottenham last month, he emphasised the need for a specialist trainer at White Hart Lane and that he wanted to bring over Schmid from Grasshopper Zurich, their former club in Switzerland.

Gross's turbulent 40-day reign at White Hart Lane received another setback when Les Ferdinand, the Tottenham striker, voiced concern about having been told to train on Christmas Day, despite having sustained a bruised thigh in the 3-0 victory against Barnsley on December 20. Ferdinand claimed that the injury then worsened and, consequently, he was forced to miss the matches against Aston Villa and Arsenal.

Little has gone right for Gross since he succeeded Gerry Francis on November 20. Tottenham have won only two of the six matches under his

guidance, losing three times and conceding 15 goals, and have slipped to nineteenth in the FA Cup Premier League. Although the arrival of Jürgen Klinsmann has helped to deflect some of the criticism, Gross will be particularly unhappy at the Employment Department's decision.

Schmid, 38, is a close friend of Gross and worked alongside him at Grasshopper. A former youth and reserve-team player with the club, he completed his studies in phys-

Ferguson's gem 32
Overseas View 32

cal education at the Federal Institute of Technology in Zurich and has an extensive knowledge of sports medicine and injury rehabilitation.

Gross had hoped that the work permit would be processed swiftly but it was complicated by the fact that Schmid, like Gross, is Swiss. Switzerland is not a member of the European Union and, therefore, the usual rules allowing freedom of movement within the European Community do not apply.

An Employment Department spokesman said: "In these cases, we ask 'Are they uniquely qualified to such an extent that they can bring skills and talents to the game that are not available in the UK?' We also ask: 'Have they got an established international reputation?' On the basis of the information we have at the moment, Schmid has not met those criteria."

Tottenham have appealed against the decision. "If Spurs come up with the information that clarifies the situation, we'll look at it as quickly as we can," the spokesman added. "Appeals can take a couple of weeks, or less, depending on the circumstances."

It was originally believed that Gross only signed his 18-month contract on the condition that Schmid joined him, but Tottenham yesterday denied that there was any such clause. "The terms of Christian Gross's employment have never been conditional upon the employment of anyone else," a club spokesman said.

On Sunday, after the 1-1 draw at home to Arsenal, Gross was coy about his future at Tottenham should Schmid's application be unsuccessful. "If you are asking if I'll go if he doesn't get it, I cannot answer you," he said. "I just cannot say."

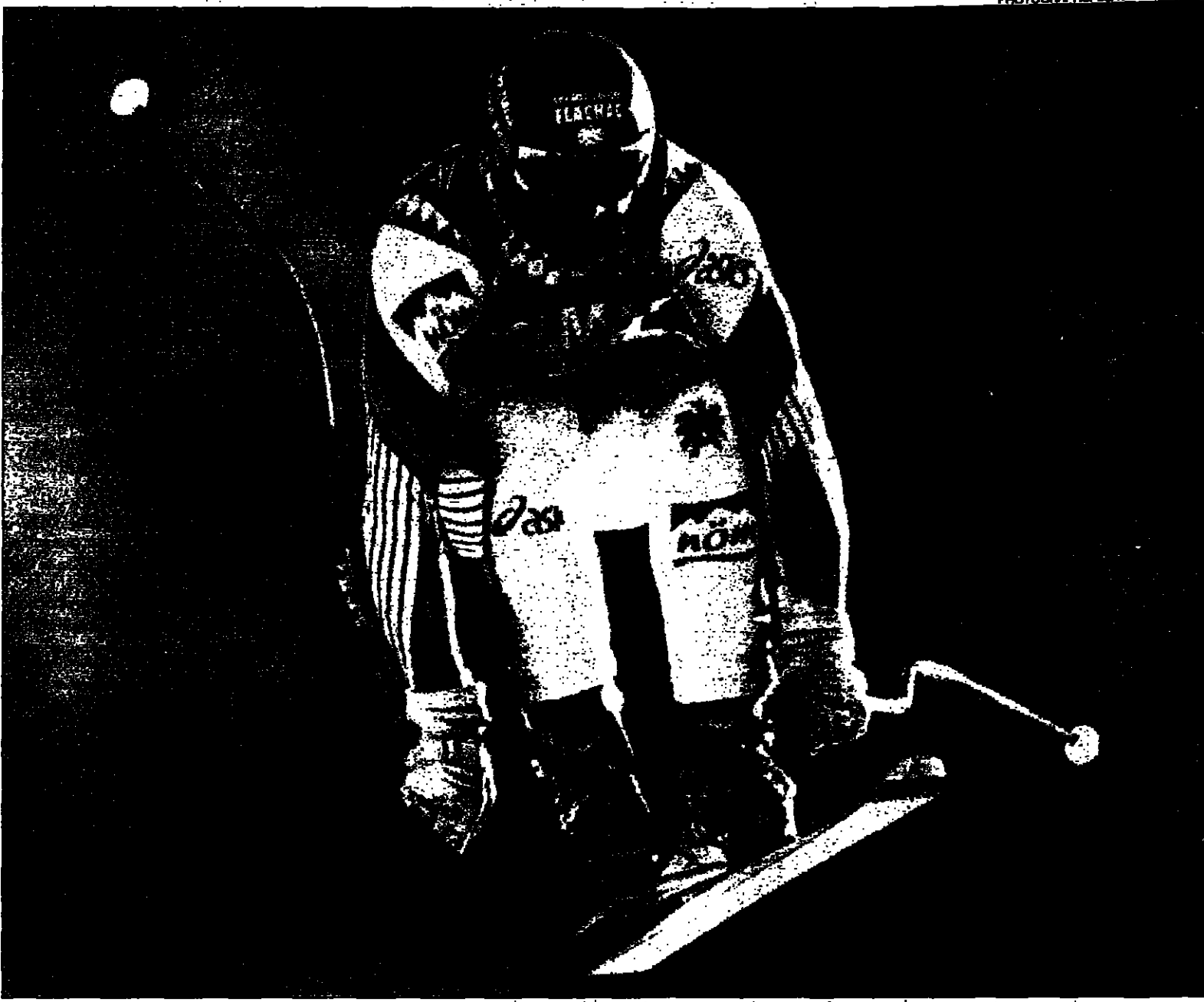
Yesterday, amid reports that he was being considered for the vacant coaching job of the Swiss national side, he was more forthcoming. "This is all speculation," Gross said. "There is no question of me taking charge of the Swiss team. I am committed to Spurs."

Pierre Benoit, chief of communications for the Swiss FA, said yesterday: "Christian was a candidate before he moved to Tottenham but not any more. There have been no discussions, there is no possibility of him coming back here. We are still looking."

Benoit said that Gross appeared happy in London, though that is unlikely to be the case when he hears the comments of Ferdinand. The England striker had a scan on his injured thigh yesterday and could be out for a month.

"If I had rested my leg for a few days I probably could have played against Arsenal, but I was made to train through it," Ferdinand said. "I trained on Christmas Day, tried to shoot and felt it go. There's muscle damage and a lot of blood under the surface of the skin."

Benjamin Melquiond, meanwhile, sustained a broken shoulder, concussion and a cut eye in a high-speed crash during what was the third of



Maier flies through the air on his way to victory in the men's downhill in Bormio yesterday, a result that extended his overall World Cup lead

Maier takes honours as Austrians dominate again

By OUR SPORTS STAFF

HERMANN MAIER won the men's World Cup downhill race at the Italian resort of Bormio yesterday. It was his first downhill triumph and he led an Austrian sweep of the first four places.

The 25-year-old former bricklayer scored his third World Cup victory of the season, recording a time of 2min 01.59sec to increase his lead in the overall standings. Andreas Schifferer was second, three hundredths of a second back, and Werner Franz third, a further fifth of a second behind. Stefan Eberharter was fourth.

The Austrians have dominated the early-season Alpine events, leading up to the Olympic Games in Nagano in February, and yesterday filled seven of the first ten places on a tight, twisting, technical Slavia course. Maier, who also has super giant and giant slalom wins to his credit this season, is fast emerging as a great all-rounder.

Benjamin Melquiond, meanwhile, sustained a broken shoulder, concussion and a cut eye in a high-speed crash during what was the third of

the season's 11 World Cup downhill races. Racing was held up while the 22-year-old Frenchman was treated on the course.

Melquiond, who is expected to be sidelined for at least a month, lost his balance and crashed through safety nets at the S-shaped section preceding the final jump on the icy course.



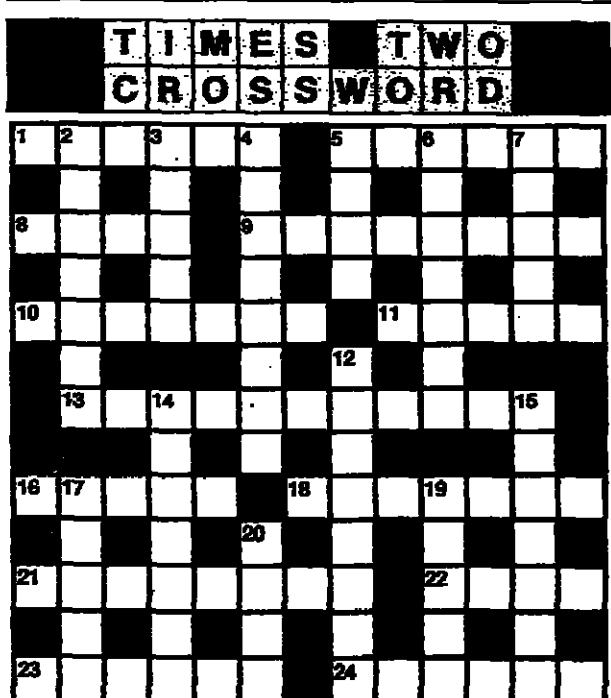
Melquiond: injured

The race was the first World Cup downhill since December 5 — when Maier finished second behind Schifferer — and is followed by a second downhill at Bormio today.

"I have to admit I'm a little surprised to have won," Maier said. "My tactics were to take it relatively easy today and then go for victory tomorrow. I made a few mistakes near the bottom and I found it difficult to see. One minute I was in sunlight, the next in darkness and I very nearly lost it completely."

Maier said he almost decided to skip Bormio to concentrate on the giant slalom and super giant race — his favourite events — scheduled for Slovenia and Austria in early January. "Then I saw how icy and fast the course was and I thought I'd give it a go to try to get more World Cup points," he said.

Schifferer said: "I made mistakes on the upper part of the course, so I have to be happy with second. This confirms my victory at Beaver Creek wasn't just a one-off and I hope I can go from here to pick up points in the slaloms."



No 1289

ACROSS
1 Frank, honest (6)
5 Keep several balls in air (6)
8 Door-frame side (4)
9 Secondary occupation (8)
10 Climbing-plant frame (7)
11 Insipid (5)
13 Disturb (settled situation) (4,3,4)
16 Transparency; slither (5)
18 Dim; puzzling (7)
21 Wrist ornament (8)
22 Useless; concealed (4)
23 Charlie — Lord Jim narrator (Conrad) (6)
24 Jacob —, Scrooge's partner (Dickens) (6)

DOWN
2 Non-professional (7)
3 Fix (computer program) (5)
4 Uninhabited; friendless (8)
5 NT epistle — the 18, Hardy (4)
6 ft. astronomer, Inquisition victim (7)
7 Vladimir Ilych —, Bolshevik (5)
12 Word for word (8)
14 Will addendum (7)
15 Course pâté (7)
17 Immature insect form (5)
19 Protect; deal with (5)
20 Bird's nail (4)

SOLUTION TO NO 1288

ACROSS: 1 Sustain 5 Scald 8 Acute 9 Cuirass 10 Walk the plank 12 Reside 14 Apathy 17 All systems go 21 Cuisine 22 Idols 23 Shell 24 Tumulus
DOWN: 1 Stalwart 2 Skull 3 Abetted 4 Nickel 5 Skill 6 Against 7 Dish 11 Synopsis 13 Saltire 15 Premium 16 Aspect 18 Skirt 19 Scowl 20 Ices

Sheffield United get shirty with Taylor

By DAVID MADDOCKS

CHRISTMAS is clearly over at Bramall Lane, where the spirit of Scrooge overtook any sense of goodwill on Sunday. The festive story centres on Gareth Taylor, the Sheffield United forward.

The 24-year-old bade what he thought was his farewell to the United supporters, with a £700,000 move to Utrecht, of Holland, in the offing, in an emotional scene in front of the Kop. After scoring in the 4-1 defeat of Charlton Athletic, he tearfully offered his shirt to a young boy in the crowd.

Taylor himself now takes up the story. "I went back into the dressing-room feeling a little bit emotional because I thought that was my final game. But the manager came up to me and said that the shirt was the property of the club and I would be charged £40 for giving it away."

Times are hard at Sheffield United, which is why they were prepared to sell Taylor in the first place, but asking him to pay for the shirt — surely it could

not be true? Yes it is, according to Nigel Spackman, the manager. "You can make what you like of what Gareth did — all it means to me is that he will get the bill for the new shirt," he said.

And our story does not have a happy ending, either. The proposed move has now been placed on hold because, according to Spackman, they have also had interest registered in Jan Åge Fjørtoft and Spackman is prepared to allow only one forward to leave the club. Who said that the spirit of Christmas is dead?

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